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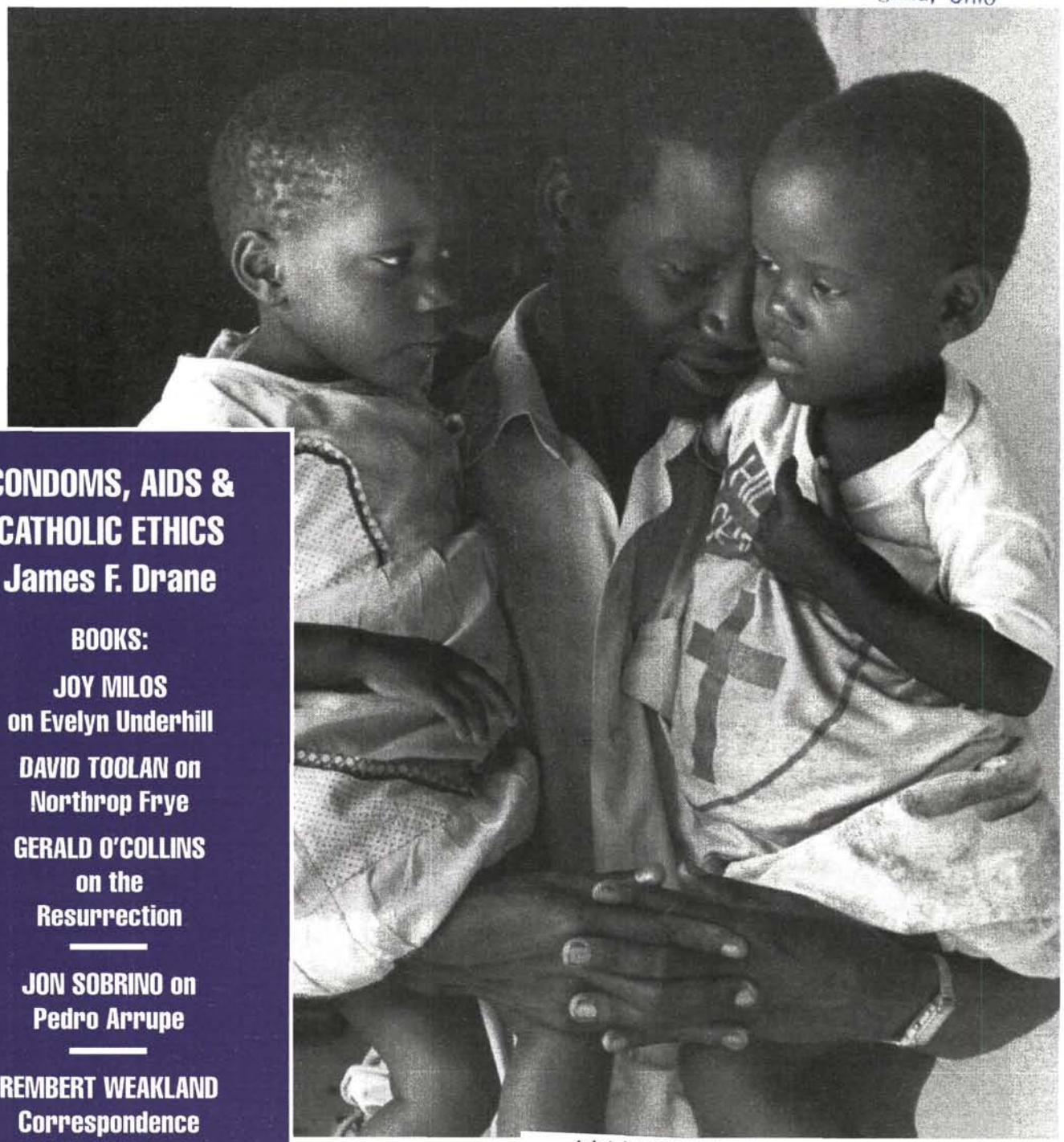

CONDOMS, AIDS & CATHOLIC ETHICS
James F. Drane

BOOKS:

JOY MILOS on Evelyn Underhill

DAVID TOOLAN on Northrop Frye

GERALD O'COLLINS on the Resurrection

JON SOBRINO on Pedro Arrupe

REMBERT WEAKLAND Correspondence The Editors

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Gulf tangle

Charlestown, Mass.

To the Editors: I commend you for your issue of February 22. Mary Lou Kownacki's call for the peace movement to put more weight on what some might dismiss as appeals to "sentimentality" deserves consideration. Her personal reaction to reading *All Quiet on the Western Front* had an even more significant counterpart in that the original film version was often cited by World War II conscientious objectors (including Lew Ayres, its star) as a major factor in leading them to take that stand.

Kownacki's proposal was balanced nicely by the humorous touch of George Weigel's description of what a "genuine" peace movement would be. His recommendations seem to require a more intense commitment to a tradition that has lost much of its relevance by making it possible for Catholics to support any war that comes along—provided, of course, that commitment is suitably tempered with prudence and due reverence for whatever the U.S. might define as its national security in any given circumstances. If I were not taken up with answering a flood of calls from people seriously concerned about Mr. Bush's ass-kicking venture, I might follow George Weigel's example and do a paper on how the nation's military establishment should be organized and operate.

Then there is Bryan Hehir's troubling article, balanced and articulate as always, but in this reader's opinion, missing (or at least not recognizing) the crucial point. It is all well and good to cover all the plusses and minuses as he does, but if there is any sense at all to the elaborations and calculations of the just-war conditions, they should lead to a final conclusion confirming that whatever war to which they are being applied is *just* or, if not, unworthy of Christian support or participation. He seems to reverse that process and, at least by implication, puts the burden of proof upon those who would challenge its justice, requiring *them* to establish beyond doubt that the conditions are not being met. In the process, that presumption against the use of force upon which "the logic of the just-war case" supposedly rests becomes irrelevant, is negated, or disappears altogether.

GORDON ZAHN

The writer is national director of the Center on Conscience and War.

Give song a chance

Decorah, Iowa

To the Editors: Thomas Day's *Why Catholics Can't Sing* is a rambling, opinionated book. Yet Archbishop Weakland's comments ["Off Key and Off the Mark," January 25] are unfortunate and will, I'm afraid, serve as a soporific. Of course, parishes should make use of professionally trained musicians. Yet it is precisely some of the perceived professionals (e.g., the compilers of the unhappy *Glory and Praise*) who produced some of the stuff Day correctly identifies as part of the problem.

Why is it that a large congregation should have to sit through a spoken Sunday Mass with nothing to sing except some kitschy camp songs or some subjective "contemporary" canticles that cannot be mastered even by worshipers who sing perfectly decently when they happen to attend some ecumenical service in a Protestant church? Why is it that students in a course in American religions, required to attend several churches over a semester, are repeatedly struck when they attend a Mass and then half an hour later go to some Lutheran church with maybe only a hundred unsophisticated worshipers and hear a moderately decent prelude and postlude, participate in a sung liturgy (almost identical to the Ordinary of the Mass), and join in singing several genuine hymns that may include, depending on the occasion, such classics as "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name," "Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past," or even Thomas Aquinas's "Thee We Adore, O Hidden Savior Thee," set to a plain-song melody?

The small churches I refer to have no song leaders, no professional musicians, no committees to plan each service, and the churches are just as lacking in acoustical design as the Catholic churches. Small Methodist or Presbyterian churches, albeit with no sung liturgy, do just as well on the hymns as the Lutherans. Obviously the problem is not just the lack of professional leadership.

Catholics deserve more than they are being offered. At the minimum, they need a good, truly catholic hymn book organized along the lines of the church year (the *Collegeville Hymnal* from St. John's Abbey is a splendid beginning source), an easy but good musical setting of the Ordinary, and helpful notes on the service. They can put the organ back into full use, abolish song leaders, and trust the real liturgical professionals rather than local planning committees who are too apt to project only their own ideas of taste rather than the historic traditions of the long Christian past. And in an age when we stress ecumenical things, why not borrow from the wealth of Protestant hymnology, which precisely meant to make worship a communal activity?

Weakland might be surprised to discover that if given the chance Catholics just might

(Continued on page 204)

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COMMONWEAL

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STAFF

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Poetry: Rosemary Deen
Columnists: John Garvey, J. Bryan Hehir, Abigail McCarthy, David R. Carlin, Jr.
Staff: Harriette Balsky, Carmen Alava, Pamela Quatse
Advertising Manager: Ruth E. Taylor
Publisher: Edward S. Skillin

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Good enough for us

Question: Is the archbishop of Milwaukee a radical or a stick-in-the-mud? A traditionalist or an innovator? Pragmatic or dogmatic? Daring or docile? Answer: Rembert Weakland is a Benedictine; *ergo*, both fixed and flexible, obedient and independent. Witness his recent writing, "Facing the Future with Hope," subtitled, "Draft 1 of a Pastoral Letter to the Faithful of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee." Subject matter: planning for the prospect of more and more priestless parishes in this and coming decades. Whatever one thinks of Archbishop Weakland's views on church music [see Correspondence], his response to this situation deserves close attention.

A *draft* pastoral? Bishops, especially archbishops, do not customarily offer their ideas for pastoring as proposals rather than edicts. But this essay was published in the archdiocesan newspaper, the *Catholic Herald Citizen* [January 10], specifically for review by its readers. After six months, Weakland expects to rewrite the letter in the light of reflections and responses from clergy and laity.

As for substance, news coverage predictably and correctly fastened on paragraph 50 of the letter [partial text below], in which Weakland promised, under certain circumstances, to help a priestless parish identify "a qualified candidate for ordained priesthood—even if a married man—and, without raising false expectations or unfounded hopes for him or the community, present such a candidate to the Pastor of the Universal Church for light and guidance."

As we read "light and guidance," it means Weakland would be asking the bishop of Rome to let him go ahead and ordain the man (presumably after training and formation) and then install him as pastor. From the context, moreover, it's clear that the archbishop would be asking his boss to *change the rules* governing admission to the priesthood, not merely to *make an exception*; the reasons he sets forth for asking permission apply in a great many areas of the world besides Milwaukee. Paragraph 50 also makes clear that though Weakland will dutifully accept a negative response, he may not agree with it.

In our day, members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy do not often drop public hints that they may ever wind up being in less than perfect harmony with the *capo di tutti capi*, nor are they inclined to trouble him with awkward questions. No careerist, this Rembert; but, clearly, a radical innovator.

And yet. Operating alongside (or, rather, within) this rebel hierarch is a true-blue Tory—certainly not a reactionary but so conservative as to be in some sense a fundamentalist. Where in his pastoral do we find this mossback? All over the place. A traditionalist, in the best sense, is someone with a memory and a sense of priorities, someone who knows the "one thing necessary." Your true conservative is a realist about the facts on the ground; he or she has a preference for the specific and the concrete over the abstract and theoretical.

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Thus,"Facing the Future" starts and ends with believers where they are to be found, in parishes. Not some idealized parish, but parishes as they are: rural, urban, suburban; rich or poor, ethnic-based or polyglot, liberal or conservative in outlook; each parish coming equipped or burdened with a history, problems, and opportunities all its own. Weakland admits to certain conservative biases. He doesn't like "mega-parishes"; a parish with more than twenty-five hundred families is too big. Closing or merging parishes as the solution to the priest shortage troubles him. He is troubled also by the notion of "circuit-riding" priests serving several churches every week—priests must have time to prepare their sermons and to know their people, else they run the risk of burn-out and/or of becoming "sacramental machines." (For Weakland, "the sacraments must always be related to life or they become magic.") Most of all, he recoils from the prospect of priestless parishes where the Mass is routinely replaced by a Liturgy of the Word, however well and carefully done, with or without distribution of Holy Communion.

In short, what Weakland is saying, or singing, is: "Gimme that old-time religion, it's good enough for me." For him—as, one hopes, for the rest of us—the old-time religion is by definition and in its essence a *sacramental* religion, one that obeys the command, "Do this in memory of me." And you can't have the sacraments without priests. It is good to have lay ministers at hand and to give them responsibilities in the parish; it is good, because necessary, that priests give up some of their accrued powers along with some of their traditional duties. Celibacy is to be praised and vocations to the celibate priesthood are to be sought. But realism forces acknowledgment that, in this country and many others, no great surge of new vocations is at hand. Lay ministers, even permanent deacons, cannot preside at the Eucharist, and without the Eucharist and the other sacraments Catholic identity will be lost.

What follows? Weakland reports learning on a visit to the Soviet Union that the Russian Orthodox, also a sacramental communion, are suddenly reacquiring thousands of churches that had been closed for decades. Their solution: "The bishop usually assembles the people, announces that the church will reopen, and then elicits from the people the name of one of the older married men who should be their pastor. Adequate training is then provided according to the capabilities the church has at this time. This practice has a certain resonance with that of the early church."

Apart from that brief historical reference, the archbishop's whole case rests on the needs of the faithful, and not on any new view of the nature of priesthood; given the looming shortage of clergy, he says, this is the only way he sees to let Catholics be Catholic. Interestingly, there are two other things he doesn't see (or, more probably, doesn't care to talk about). First, that many in the church have used the argument from pastoral needs to contend for the ordination of women (which is not to say that the issues are identical). Second, that letting married men be ordained will inevitably lead to requests from ordained men for permission to marry, and to requests for reinstatement from men who have left the active priesthood to be married. Could be he doesn't like these solutions; could be he does but knows better than to stir up more than one hornet's nest at a time, and prefers, like a sound conservative, to let the logic of history and experience prevail. No doubt he'll be hearing from his readers on these points and will have to deal with them in the next draft.

Even as it stands, however, this is already the most interesting pastoral letter we've seen in some years. To give an unmediated taste of it we close, as promised, with the most significant parts of its most significant passage.

"50. For all these reasons, I would like to present the following for your reflection:

"—if a parish that cannot have a regular Mass on Sundays because of the shortage of priests remains faithful in assembling each Sunday for the Liturgy of the Word, presided over by a lay minister or a deacon, and with the distribution of Holy Communion outside of Mass only on rare occasions such as feasts, lest it become habitual and be seen as a normal substitute for the Mass;

"—and if the parish continues to have all the characteristics described in the first section of this document, namely, worship and a sacramental perspective that is a part of their theology and practice whenever possible, education at all levels, and outreach to the needy;

"—and if the parish has an active vocation program for the celibate priesthood;

"—and if it seems that this state of affairs may continue for many years, perhaps into the next decade;

"then I would be willing to help the community surface a qualified candidate for ordained priesthood—even if a married man—and, without raising false expectations or unfounded hopes for him or the community, present such a candidate to the Pastor of the Universal Church for light and guidance. In such a case we would have done all possible at the local level and could feel that we had been responsible stewards of God's goods and graces. If the strength of the church then should diminish here because of the continued lack of ordained priests and sacramental opportunities for the faithful, our consciences could remain in peace. We had done our best."

It's not exactly, "Here I stand, I can do no other." But, in our view, it's certainly a challenge, one that is both pragmatic and principled, at once visionary enough, given the times, as to be startling, and so packed with common sense as to demand assent. At least from us.

THE NEWS FROM LIMBO

Three years ago, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art briefly exhibited *The Descent into Limbo* by the Italian Renaissance painter Andrea Mantegna (1431-1500). The small painting, from a private collection, was placed at eye-level and could be grasped at a single glance. At least initially. But then something extraordinary happens. The painting, its action and detail, envelops the viewer. At its center is a whirling scene, Christ striding out of Limbo and leading forth a troop of ancients, Father Adam

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at their head, second-born from the dead.

Two things are remarkable about the Mantegna. The subject: Christ's first act after his own death was to free captives. And the second—without which the painting might have been little more than an illustration for a catechism—is the mastery of Mantegna's execution. He was at the height of his powers here: Every single hair of his figures bristles, and the throng of those following Christ out of the cavern of death are sucked inexorably into the light, as if by a massive vacuum. Viewing the painting, one feels a palpable rush of air.

In New York City's East River there is another sort of limbo. It is 440-acre Rikers Island, the nation's most populous penal institution. There are, at the moment, over fourteen thousand men and women incarcerated there. Federal judges have issued more than twenty separate orders on overcrowding and brutality at Rikers. To no avail. The island has a special ward for AIDS patients; forty-six died there in 1988 alone. Father Pierre Raphael, a Catholic chaplain who has worked on the island since 1980, says that he has seen more than eighty suicides. In *Inside Rikers Island: A Chaplain's Search for God* (Orbis), he writes that "one thing is for sure, no one who gets into this place will ever come out the same." He includes himself.

A French worker-priest ordained in 1961, Raphael is drawn to what he calls "the hard core." For years he lived in a community of Charles de Foucauld near New York's Bowery and worked as an aid in a detoxification unit at a city shelter, a work he says "prepared me quite naturally for Rikers." At the island prison, he notes, the graffiti spell out a sense of death and no exit: "Kill for fun." "God doesn't exist here." "Hell cannot last forever." Raphael's purpose: "To make sure that that hell doesn't last." But not by promising escape. "What do prisoners expect of me? Not dreams and fantasies—they have already seen enough of these!—but hope...."

To provide that hope at Rikers, a place where "the Spirit of Discord finds a prime locus," he and a group of other chaplains and volunteers have worked diligently to create a "parish behind bars." (Is such a thing possible? Read his book. It may just be a minor classic.) The program consists of regular church services; classes that aim at being a school of faith; a quarterly newsletter, *The Link*; once every three months, a retreat for prisoners and their families; and an unrelenting willingness to pay attention.

The secret of conveying hope in prison, writes Raphael, is personal contact and long hours of listening: "One of the priest's gifts is that of hearing the secrets of the heart, of taking risks to do so, and without approving everything, nevertheless, of accepting and understanding it." "For them, I am a kind of emergency exit, a way to 'somewhere else.'" He writes these things with a kind of pure modesty and without the least note of self-aggrandizement—as anyone who has ever heard him give a homily can attest.

The work takes all his wits, all his faith. Wits: "There is an intelligent instinct in the prison because it is the instinct of the poor. There are living and explosive forces, full of question marks for a society that is too simplistic." And faith: "In a situation of dereliction, malice, and intense anger, only the gospel is able to disarm, to restore....When someone has reached absolute bottom...the church, which has itself the treasure of life, is the only organ that is truly a friend capable of response." A ministry to prisoners is not a gratuitous gesture, he says. It is a demand of Jesus.

Raphael tells the story of what he calls the "antiprison" at Rikers Island: "What I love most about the tabernacle in the chapel at Rikers...is that the door...has nothing to hold it shut. The only door in the whole building that has no key is here, at the center. And not even the most punctilious people here take exception to it." The Eucharist, the liturgy, "they are the source and end of everything we are seeking here," the lighthouse and reference point, "the half-hour of truth." Why does he call them that? Because "we never have communal prayer without mentioning the victims"; and "it is impossible to con the gospel." The liturgy, Raphael concludes, "is not there to help us live, to support and console us, but to change us." Isn't that precisely what Mantegna's Christ is doing? No wonder the rush of air, the gasping, as lungs begin to breathe again, almost as if for the first time.

Does wind rush through the corridors of Rikers when Pierre Raphael and his co-workers walk through them? It would not be surprising. That is the way the good news reaches the far corners of creation. For it is through the bearers of God's forgiveness and freedom—people like Raphael and his companions—that we too experience the ongoing reality, the unapproachable power, of the first Easter.

ET CETERA

THE COMPUTER DID IT Courtesy of the *Washington Post,* we pass along this "Correction of the Year," published in the *Fresno Bee*:

"An item in Thursday's [paper] about the Massachusetts budget crisis made reference to new taxes that will help put Massachusetts 'back in the African-American.' The item should have said 'back in the black.'"

CALL ME ANYTHING, BUT... When they settled on the *Fresno Bee* as winner of the corrections derby, the editors of the *Post* may not have seen this item from the *Staten Island* (N.Y.) *Advance:*

"Josephine Kowaleski was elected senior vice-president of the Agony Auxiliary of the Military Order of the Cooties. Her name was reported incorrectly in the *Advance* yesterday."

SHOW SOME MUSCLE, FELLAS Democrats are suffering from an acute case of the "wimp factor," that debilitating political bug that afflicted George Bush just a few short wars ago. Republicans obviously want to turn the debate over the use of force in the Persian Gulf into this year's Pledge of Allegiance issue. But Democrats should take heart. Let them print up buttons that read: "I Voted My Conscience." Most Americans, if not most Republicans, still know what that means.

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ARES IS EQUITABLE

THE SEDUCTION OF MIGHT

Forcing myself to turn off the television, simultaneously fascinated by the video game renditions of the first days of the Gulf war and appalled by their implications, I turn to the bookshelf. Only Simone Weil will do. In 1939 as the world assembled to defeat Hitler, Weil—this perhaps-Manichaean, perhaps-saint, no doubt brilliant French philosopher who died at thirty-six as a consequence of identifying with World War II's hunger victims—wrote a classic essay, "The Iliad, Poem of Might."

Weil was no pacifist. On her own she traveled to cheer on and nurse Republican troops in the Spanish Civil War, though she came away disgusted by the violence on both sides. On the eve of World War II, she left the safety of New York for England, where she repeatedly petitioned the French leadership of the Allied Forces to send her to the front as a nurse. As a Jew the danger for her was doubly great. Refusing to eat more than the rations allowed the French on the continent, she died in an English sanatorium of starvation and tuberculosis in 1943.

In England she wrote *The Need for Roots*, her major political work and a prophecy of postwar problems. Other works, for the most part based on her notebooks, trace the path of a soul resolutely stalking God. But it is her relatively brief essay on *The Iliad* that is most accessible to the new reader of Simone Weil and most helpful to me at this time.

Beginning with the first paragraph the essay illuminates the present. The real hero and subject of *The Iliad* is might, says Weil. Moreover, the might wielded by men [*sic*] in turn rules them. Before it the "flesh cringes," but more crucially perhaps, "the human soul never ceases to be modified by its encounter with might, swept on, blinded by that which it believes itself able to handle, bowed beneath the power of that which it suffers."

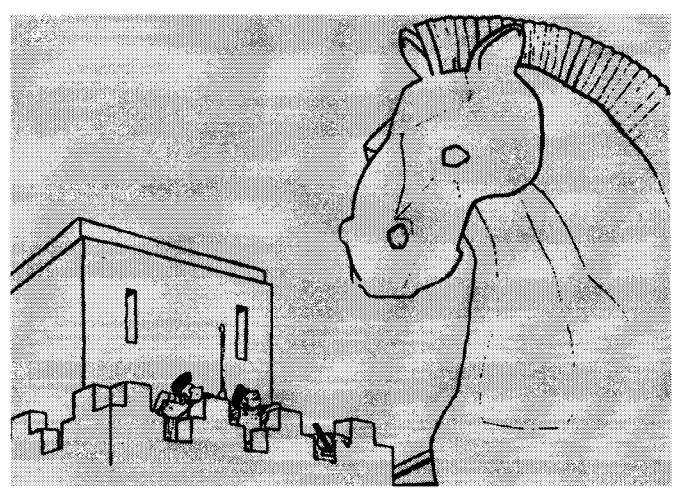
With many examples from *The Iliad*, Weil shows how might makes things of people, the ultimate thing being the corpse, dragged behind the dust of a chariot. Those who don't die become slaves, things as well: "In their days is no give and take, no open field, no free road over which anything can pass to or from them." They have become other than human, "a compromise between a man and a corpse." Because the soul was not made to dwell in a thing, it suffers even more violence than the body.

Nor are the victors spared "thingness." "As pitilessly as might crushes, so pitilessly it maddens whoever possesses, or believes he possesses it." For in truth no one can control it for long. *The Iliad* refuses to divide the human race into victor and the vanquished; indeed Thucydides says the Greeks were conquered only eighty years after they conquered Troy. Homer sums it up: "Ares is equitable, he kills those who kill." Even battle itself destroys the souls of the conquerors, as when the Greek leader Thersites admonishes his troops: "You have neither courage nor strength,/You count for nothing in battle, for nothing in the assembly."

Achilles, the proud unvanquished hero, opens the poem with his tears of humiliation, and Agamemnon humiliates him further to show he is master. A few days later even that supreme Greek leader is humbled. Nevertheless, they both persist in violence. Weil brilliantly analyzes the behavior of the wielder of might. Swayed by the illusion of possessing absolute strength, the strong man "moves in an atmosphere which offers him no resistance. Nothing in the human element surrounding him is of a nature to induce, between the intention and the act, that brief interval where thought may lodge. Where there is no room for thought, there is no room either for justice or prudence. This is the reason why men of arms behave with such harshness and folly."

Could the warriors imagine that the consequences of their acts might turn back on themselves, they might act differently, says Weil. If they could think of their own strength as limited, themselves as perishable. Ultimately because they go beyond the measure of their strength, they are in turn delivered up helpless before chance just as their victims are. "The winning of battles is not determined between men who plan and deliberate, who make a resolution and carry it out, but between men drained of these faculties, transformed, fallen to the level either of inert matter, which is all passivity, or to the level of blind forces, which are all momentum. This is the final secret of war."

Weil laments that the geometric strictness that constitutes the soul of the epic and became a subject of meditation for the Greeks has been lost to the West, whose languages have not even the words to express the ideas of limit, measure, and equilibrium that should govern the conduct of life. She opines, chauvinistically perhaps, that the concept of *karma* in the East originated with the Greeks. She thinks that Christianity began to transmit Christ's view of suffering awry when stories of early martyrs emphasized their going joyfully to their deaths. "Even the incarnate God himself could not look on the rigors of destiny without anguish." Unless protected by lies, the depth of the soul suffers a blow



"I'm all fingers and thumbs when it comes to opening things."

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at the hands of might. And this "violence so crushes whomever it touches that it appears at last external no less to him who dispenses it than to him who endures it."

This is Weil's thesis, as somber in the days of George Bush as in the days of Churchill and Agamemnon. She further analyzes why men go off to war as to a game. (Homer, of course, knew neither video games nor the football metaphors used by American pilots bombing Baghdad.) They play the game until violence takes over and all conception of goals, even goals for the war, is lost. Thus no one does anything to bring about its end. Deliverance finally appears only in the form of extreme destruction.

As Christians we might think that Weil's and the Greeks' notions of fate are more determinate than geometric. Where is grace? Where is the turning that prayer and suffering occasionally borne with grace can bring about? Surely we have evidence of that in the world also. But as a Christian who hopes and prays and fasts for the "turning" of our mighty leaders, I am tempted these days by the notion of fate, of *karma*, of righteousness, even as I am terrified of its consequences for us as Americans. Perhaps because I have been in Baghdad and know some families of Iraqi soldiers, I am tempted to give Simone Weil the last word, though there is small consolation in it.

"Perhaps they [Europeans, Americans] will rediscover that epic genius [Homer] when they learn how to accept the fact that nothing is sheltered from fate, how never to admire might, or hate the enemy, or to despise sufferers. It is doubtful if this will happen soon." EVELYN MATTERN

Evelyn Mattern lives and writes in North Carolina.

THE GULF WAR

GIVING BIRTH TO PEACE?

CHOOSING 'KLITAH' OVER 'SHLITAH'

Through the clouds and the ascending smoke hovering over the Persian Gulf, diplomats and analysts are trying to discern what lies beyond the horizons after the war. Disagreement over postwar settlements will, to a certain extent, eclipse the debate which has accompanied events since last August. But the debate will not be submerged entirely. Are the voices of protest opposing the United States-led coalition against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait also the voices for peace in the Middle East?

I have no doubt that the peace movement in the United States demonstrated against war out of concern for the loss of human life. However, I believe they may have ignored the extraordinary historical changes which have taken place in the world during the last three years.

The wars fought by America in the past, such as the Vietnam war, were always connected to the ongoing threat of a Soviet-American confrontation. This time we are witnessing an unprecedented phenomenon in which the U.S. is coordinating its efforts, on different levels, not only with Western Europe, but also with the Soviet Union—President Mikhail Gorbachev's last-minute initiatives for a peaceful settlement notwithstanding.

The world is in a transition from a state of polarization between two powerful enemies, to one in which concepts such as "stability" and "interests" are being given a different and much broader meaning. While there is still a temptation to use expressions such as the "new world order," and although we are far from a harmonious world without conflict and crises, we are undoubtedly moving in the direction of new international rules.

If the recent troubling developments in the Soviet Union do not throw that country back into the age of cold-war and Stalinist-like repression, then we can and should expect Soviet participation in new strategies for resolving local and regional conflicts. Tragically, Saddam Hussein threatened world peace at a very critical juncture in this process.

We cannot ignore the dramatic effect of the Gulf war and repeated Scud missile attacks on the people of Israel. The Persian Gulf crisis has forced the right wing in Israel to admit to an inescapable paradox. On one hand, it wishes to see Saddam Hussein's military force totally destroyed. On the other hand, the leaders of the Right acknowledge that the international coalition which was forged to advance on the aggressor from Baghdad will not be curtailed by Yitzhak Shamir's veto. Furthermore, Israelis have clearly undergone a process of deprovincializing the Israeli-Arab conflict. An entire nation sat in sealed rooms, wearing gas masks, and arrived at the realization that the conflict in our part of the world will not be decided by the rocks and knives of the *intifada* nor by the settlers of Hebron or Nablus; but rather, that these issues, and others, are part of larger regional and global forces affecting our lives as well.

The Left in Israel preferred a peaceful solution to the Persian Gulf crisis, but without giving Saddam Hussein a prize for his aggression by "linking" Iraq's withdrawal to the Palestinian problem. Israel did not incite Iraq to invade Kuwait, and Saddam did not brutalize the Kuwaiti people in order to save the Palestinians. These are two indisputable facts.

"Linkage" would have seriously thwarted the peace process between Israel and its Arab neighbors. It isn't that the strategic, economic, and political issues of the Middle East are not interrelated. Rather, it is that "linkage" would have induced a radicalizing influence on the Arab masses, including the Palestinians, thus encouraging extremism and a false messianism around Saddam. This would have vindicated the Israeli leadership, entrenching itself even deeper into the bunker of rejectionism due to the Iraqi threat and the inability of the world community to remove this brutal aggressor from the region.

Even that part of Israel which advocates a just solution to the Palestinian problem is deeply concerned by an international coalition that might ignore Israel's legitimate security concerns. Public opinion polls prior to August 2 indicated increasing Israeli support for dialogue with the Palestinian leadership and a political solution to the conflict between our two peoples. Much of that support was shattered by Palestinian identification with Saddam.

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After two years of repeated, if not completely unfailing, attempts at adopting new policies that include full recognition of Israel and the denunciation of terror, the leadership of the PLO should be commended. However, the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion revived the classic Palestinian syndrome, which since 1947 has been rooted in extremist illusions, misconstruing their own true interests, and resulting in disaster after disaster for the Palestinian people. Israel, too, shares responsibility for the collapse of the peace process last spring by undermining its own initiative for elections in the occupied territories and driving the PLO into a political cul de sac.

There are those in the Israeli peace camp who would conclude that we must wait before taking steps to rekindle the political process. However, even those who would like to "punish" Arafat (the U.S., Israel, Egypt, and Syria) cannot sweep the Palestinian issue under the carpet. At a time when Islamic fundamentalism casts its eyes not only to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, but also to the Al-Aksa mosque on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, it would be political blindness at its worst to take revenge on the Palestinians, thus dooming the region to yet another cycle of violence.

The Israeli peace camp must remain loyal to its principles: Peace begins at home, and our common home is that ancient land, which over the centuries became the homeland of two peoples. The choice for us is living together in peace and security, or in a shared hell.

Concern for the survival of Israel, including the removal of strategic threats against it, dictates a regional peace agreement. Concern for a normal and more humane life, for Israelis and Palestinians, requires an immediate solution to the Palestinian problem. A well-known saying from our elder sages teaches that it is "never early nor late for the Torah." We must use all that is at our disposal to pursue this principle for the teaching of peace...the Torah of peace.

It is too early to determine under what international auspices negotiations for peace will take place. The United States will probably weigh an American-Soviet aegis, with Egyptian support, against the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

From a strictly American interest, there are advantages and disadvantages to both.

Of course, Israel will have to pay a price by withdrawing from most of the territories it conquered in 1967. These territories are part of the Jewish homeland, engraved in our consciousness, our culture, and our collective memory. But the fact is that the Palestinian people also live there and we cannot continue to rule over them.

We also cannot ignore the massive emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel. There is an inherent connection between successful absorption and a fruitful peace process. Without a political resolution of this conflict, Israel will not succeed in raising the tens of billions of dollars, from America and the international community, necessary to absorb at least one million immigrants. Israel will have to decide between *klitah* (absorption) and *shlitah* (rule...over another people). Absorbing one or two million Jews, or ruling over two million Palestinians. We can no longer avoid these decisions. This is not simply a question of financial assistance. It is a matter of wisely utilizing our limited national resources to fulfill our destiny as a home for the ingathering of exiles, a secure haven for the Jewish people, and a light unto the nations.

YAIR TZABAN

Yair Tzaban is a member of the Knesset representing Israel's Democratic Socialist MAPAM party.

PEDRO ARRUPE, R.I.P.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MICAH

A JESUIT'S WITNESS FOR JUSTICE

Pedro Arrupe, S.J., superior general of the Society of Jesus from 1965 to 1983, died in Rome on Febrary 5, following a long illness. The son of a Basque architect, Arrupe worked in Japan for nearly three decades before being elected superior general. As general, he served during the closing session of Vatican II and the turbulent years of postconciliar reform. Under his leadership, Jesuits around the world became more involved in service to the poor and working for justice. This in turn helped provoke controversy within the Jesuits and led to tensions with the Vatican. In 1979, Pope John Paul II publicly reprimanded the society, and when Arrupe suffered a stroke in 1981, the pope took the extraordinary step of appointing a personal delegate to run the order until a general congregation could elect Arrupe's successor. The following article, which was translated by Gene Palumbo, is based on a sermon given by Jon Sobrino, S.J., at a memorial Mass for Arrupe held in the Archbishop Romero Chapel at the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) in San Salvador, El Salvador, on February 9. Ignacio Ellacuria and five other Jesuit martyrs lie buried in the same chapel.

THE EDITORS

It is no easy thing to say in a few words who Pedro Arrupe was. Ignacio Ellacuria put it well: "Arrupe was a man of God, a man for men and women, and a man of history." As such, he made his way into all our hearts.

As superior general of the Jesuits, Arrupe's job was to look at the totality of our world. What he saw was a world dehumanized in a thousand ways, especially by the terrible poverty and injustice of the third world. He took all this in with the eyes of mercy, as St. Ignatius instructs in his meditation on the Incarnation, and asked the world's Jesuits to react. During the society's general congregation in 1975, over which he presided, Arrupe demanded that all of us take up "the defense of the faith and the promotion of justice." But he did not only demand; he offered us encouragement.

We know this very well in El Salvador. Before 1975, we had tensions with his advisers as we began taking our first steps working for justice. But after those early misunderstandings, Arrupe always supported us and encouraged us. In January 1976,

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when the first of fifteen bombs exploded at the UCA, he wrote to us immediately. He didn't accuse us of getting involved in politics, and he didn't tell us to back off. He urged us to carry on. And with one of those gestures so typical of him, he sent us a donation of $5,000. A few weeks later, Father Rutilio Grande, S.J., was murdered; and shortly after that, all the Jesuits in El Salvador received a threat from the White Warriors Union: Leave the country or be killed. Again, Arrupe wasn't scared off. "Don't leave; stay right where you are," he said. He was always like that, encouraging us, in El Salvador and in all the third world.

He knew that, as it is written above the tombs of our martyrs buried in this chapel, a price would have to be paid. As the inscription above their graves here reads: "What does it mean to be a Jesuit today? It means committing oneself, under the standard of the cross, to the critical struggle of our time: The struggle for the faith, and the struggle for justice which the faith itself demands....We shall not engage in that struggle without paying a price." And the fact is that thirty-three Jesuits have been murdered in the third world since 1975.

Arrupe was willing to pay a price himself. His defense of the Jesuits of El Salvador, and his encouragement of the Jesuits in Nicaragua to give "critical support"—*critical*, but nonetheless *support*—to the Sandinista revolution, led to a great deal of personal suffering and loneliness, even to his being marginalized. Yet he had the strength to keep to his conviction till the end.

As general, it fell to Arrupe to make difficult and painful decisions, to inform us of our excesses and exaggerations; but in all of that, he was a man of gentleness. If I may be allowed a personal word, in 1980 he received complaints about me from the Vatican—to them, a theology in favor of justice seemed excessively dangerous. Arrupe sent me their complaints. He asked me to hear them with faith and humility, and to answer them honestly. But what I will never forget are the following words from his letter to me: "As soon as I received the complaints against you, I sent Father Cecil McGarry to the Vatican to tell them that I will vouch for your faith."

There was something else about Arrupe: He always radiated an incredible hope. He communicated an unshakable faith in the goodness of God and in the possibilities for goodness among human beings. He believed—he, who had been present when the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima—that, in spite of everything, history could change for the better, and that in the deepest recesses of human beings there exists a reserve of goodness that can always be drawn upon with good results.

This man for men and women was also a man of God. Everyone who knew him was struck by his profound love for Jesus Christ, by his long hours of prayer, and by his obvious devotion during the Eucharist. I was able to see all this for myself when I lived with him for a week in June 1976. To my surprise, he had called me to Rome "to talk about theology." We spoke for about eleven hours, and I remember very well that one day he said to me, "Father, you're going to laugh, but I want to read you a poem I wrote in honor of Christ, on the feast of Corpus Christi." But I most certainly didn't laugh, openly or inside. What I felt when I heard his poetry was that, as in the case of Archbishop Romero, Arrupe's theology expressed what is decisive and most important: An immense faith in God, and an immense love for Jesus and for men and women.

I can't say anything about what his inner faith was like, but I do want to express my gratitude for the profound impact that faith had on me. What struck me most strongly was that Arrupe didn't put anything ahead of the will of God. To put it very concretely, while he loved the Society of Jesus with all his heart, he didn't make it an absolute. And for the sake of the option for faith and justice, he went so far as to jeopardize the society's prestige, and even, at moments, its very existence. He was well aware of this. During his eighteen years as superior general, he saw the proof of the painful consequences of the option for faith and justice. During that period there were terrible internal divisions, and even attempts—applauded by some bishops—to establish a parallel Society of Jesus that would work against his vision. The number of Jesuits diminished by eight thousand, because the society abandoned its closed world and incarnated itself in this world of injustice and unbelief, none of which is easy. As a result, the society lost long-time friends and benefactors and gained powerful enemies who attacked it and persecuted it, even to the point of murder. Three recent popes—Paul VI, at the end of his pontificate, John Paul I, and John Paul II—did not understand, and even criticized, the new option. In 1981, it reached the point where the pope intervened, something unusual in the history of the society. This was perhaps Arrupe's greatest personal suffering—the Vatican's failure to understand him, he who was so faithful to the pope.

Thinking of these things, the words of St. Ignatius come to mind, that even if the congregation were to be dissolved, like salt in water, he wouldn't need more than fifteen minutes to regain his equanimity. It fell to Arrupe, as it did to Ignatius—and as it does to us all—to put himself before a God who is greater than everything, even the Society of Jesus. To the end, Arrupe held firm to the option for justice because he believed that was the will of God. And in doing so, he showed the rest of us his real faith in God.

Finally, Arrupe was a man of history, a history that is ever-changing. It fell to him to abandon the traditional religious forms of his first years in Europe, the United States, and Japan, and enter into the great newness of Vatican II. Later, it fell to him to see the retrenchment that followed, what Karl Rahner called the "ecclesial winter." And if it had been difficult, although also

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joyful, to move from the traditional and familiar to the new and unknown, it was even harder to accept the pain of seeing the new disappear little by little. Like the prophet Micah, however, Arrupe saw clearly what he had to do: Practice justice and love tenderly in the midst of a changing history, even if it meant, as it did in his last years, that it be done in personal obscurity. Still, like Micah, he kept going forward, always humbly and with his God.

I want to end with words far better than my own, the words of two Salvadoran believers and martyrs, Ignacio Ellacuria and Oscar Romero. Ellacuria said that Arrupe was "the John XXIII of the religious life," that he opened the windows of a stagnant religious congregation and let in light, fresh air, and the breath of the Spirit. And Archbishop Romero, who went to visit Arrupe on June 25, 1978. He was looking for consolation and encouragement during his own difficulties with the Vatican. In Romero's diary we find these words: "Father Arrupe is a very holy man; you can see how the spirit of God enlightens him."

Today, Arrupe is in the hearts of many people: the martyrs, sisters and priests, Christians, and men and women of good faith all over the world. They saw in him the presence of God among us. The poor in our countries, the crucified peoples, may not know his name; but his years as superior general were years he lived for them. And his last ten years, after his stroke, were years he lived both for them and like them: in silence, and in impotence.

JON SOBRINO

Jon Sobrino, S.J., is professor of philosophy and theology at the University of Central America in San Salvador.

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

GAYS & STRAIGHTS TOGETHER

IN ADAM'S FALL, WE SINNED ALL

There are a number of issues that believers seem to engage in a vacuum, or address as if they were only morally problematic, without seeing that they exist in a larger landscape than a merely moral one. Almost everything else having to do with sex is in this strange, more than moral category. By morality, I should make it clear, I mean the way people are called on to behave. It is interesting that the root of the word lies in the Latin word for "custom," rather than in any word having to do with truth or goodness.

I think we do something oddly contradictory where moral matters are concerned: we talk a lot about them, making all sorts of distinctions, or too few; and we sense at the same time that everything we say falls so far short of the fullness and strangeness of what we are aiming at, what we try to comprehend, that we are often quite uncomfortable with our generalizations. We know them to lack something essential.

I want to take an almost blind stab in a direction I haven't seen addressed yet, and say that we don't deal with some of these things very well because we lack, as a culture, a sense of the tragic; or, as Christians, we ignore the fullness of what is meant by humanity's fall. We act as if we could make our choices freely, acting with a clarity which may not, in fact, be present in us or in our world. It is also important to see that morality, as important as it is to our being together, is not to be equated with Christianity. It is only one consequence of what Christianity means. This is important, because otherwise good and bad forms of behavior begin to loom larger than forgiveness, or the relationship with God that forgiveness reveals, or the life revealed in Jesus' Transfiguration and Resurrection.

Recent articles about homosexuality by Richard Rodriguez, in *Harper's* (October 1990), and Andrew Sullivan, in the *New Republic* (December 17, 1990), made me think of the lives of gay friends. When some prominently placed church people say that homosexuality is "an objective disorder" they certainly go beyond their competence. How do they know? No one, not even a eunuch, is objective here. It seems to me that all the church can say about this one of many human mysteries is that the church does not accept the idea that people have a right to sex outside of marriage. The whole idea of a "right" here is, from a Christian point of view, misplaced. If a lot of people find this teaching difficult to accept, the difficulty should be approached the way the church approaches the situation of married people with ill spouses, or involuntarily single people, or anyone else who faces the difficulty of a celibacy imposed by circumstance. The idea that homosexuality is a moral issue that is somehow radically different from these others seems faulty to me. To the extent that choice has no more to do with someone's being homosexual than with someone's being heterosexual or, for that matter, with someone's having red hair, it isn't really a moral issue at all.

But other things are involved here. One is the fact that while homosexuality may not be "an objective disorder," it may also not be the most wonderful way to be a sexual human being. I don't know anyone who has a corner on that desirable condition, and I think it important to say that the homosexual W.H. Auden or Gerard Manley Hopkins was in most senses a healthier (and less "objectively disordered") person than is the heterosexual Donald Trump. On the other hand, to illustrate the awkward thing I want to get at, I want to look at the boring, but maybe parallel, issue of contraception.

There is no doubt in my mind that the kind of lovemaking that leads to a new life is, in some objective way, powerfully wonderful, more wonderful than the kind that rules it out; and as important and necessary as the sexual expression of love between married people is, when it is separated from the possibility of a new life beginning a limitation has been introduced into something essentially holy. (This is not to say

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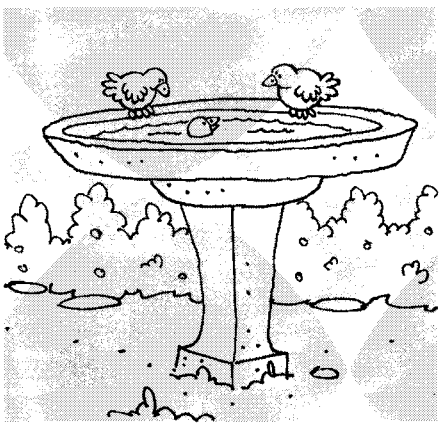
that contraception makes it unholy.) Contraception may be necessary; but where it leads people—as it easily can—to the idea that the only good life is the planned life, or the belief that our planning, our decisions, are what make life valuable, or the belief that any unplanned life is a mistake, a real evil enters.

People who oppose contraception entirely are quite wrong, for the same reason that those who think of it as an unmixed blessing are. Neither has any sense of the tragic, the idea that we may have to accept a less than wonderful state of affairs, that the good sometimes demands the acceptance of a mixed and fallen condition. It isn't good that we live in a world where people can't have as many children as they might want to bear, or that bearing children may be a physical danger; it is, however, a fact of life for many, and it is not a call to celibacy or periodic (and chancy) abstinence. It isn't good for married people to keep from one another sexually for very long (as St. Paul noted when he said that this was permissible briefly, for reasons involving prayer). On the other hand, it is also terrible when children are seen as an inconvenience, or an accident, or a burden, or best when planned.

In the same way, homosexuality may impose a tragic reality on the man or woman who is homosexual, one that heterosexuals can't ever really understand fully. I am a sexual conservative: I believe that traditional Christianity has been right to say that outside of marriage people should not have sexual intercourse. But there are distinctions that must be made here. A faithful homosexual couple is clearly not at all in the same category as someone who prefers anonymous promiscuity; in the same way, an engaged couple who make love are not in the same category as people who frequent brothels. To say this doesn't constitute endorsement or approval; it simply takes a sensible step away from the hysteria that has surrounded sexual issues for a lot of Christian thinkers. The late Gustave Weigel once said that the man who invented the distinction between mortal and venial sin must surely be in hell. The placing of sexual sins in a more dire category than other sins has at the very least led to sloppy thinking. It has almost certainly led some people to suicide.

The tradition did, at one point, have something of a different perspective. It is important to understand that the Christian attitude towards marriage and sex has evolved and changed over the centuries. In the early church monogamous concubinage was accepted, as long as it was faithful. According to Henry Chadwick (*The Early Church*, Penguin, 1967), a Spanish synod in 400 said that if a man was faithful to his concubine, as if he were married to her, this should not be a bar to Communion. The tradition has, however, been consistent about fidelity and monogamy. Although from a traditional Christian point of view the homosexual should be celibate (as should the married person with an absent or incapacitated spouse or any unmarried person), there are, beyond this, distinctions that still must be made, and made com-



"It's deeper than it looks."

passionately.

It is impossible to foresee a Christian acceptance of homosexual relations as equal to heterosexual ones, at least from the point of view of Eastern Orthodoxy or Roman Catholicism; but the fear and loathing that have allowed heterosexuals to view homosexuals with repulsion says more about the reaction of the people who feel that way than it does about morality. It seems obvious that a marriage in which sex is used exploitively is in many central ways an evil reality, a contradiction of the sacrament itself; and in a homosexual relationship which knows genuine love and sacrifice—AIDS has made extreme sacrifices tragically necessary for many—something good is taking place. Both sorts of relationship happen, as everything human does, in the middle of a mess. The point here is not so much to draw doctrinal conclusions as pastoral ones.

Aren't we talking about sin here, though? Isn't salvation from sin central to the Christian tradition? Of course it is; but we tend to think too often of sin as a summing up of our sins, of our infractions of moral law. Sin is indeed involved in our bad behavior, but sin in the biblical sense is deeper and darker and a lot more mysterious than behavior alone. It is the blindness into which we have fallen, and this underlies moral or immoral behavior, and is more deeply rooted. It involves trying to be gods on our own, trying to live as if obedience to God were not essential, instead of accepting the divine direction and obedience that will allow us to share in God's divinity.

Pascal said of Original Sin that whatever one thinks of its reasonableness as a doctrine, the human condition can't be explained without it; and I'm not sure who it was who first spoke of Original Sin as the only Christian dogma for which there is empirical evidence—I've seen Martin Marty cited—but it is more than a witty line. When St. Paul said "the good we would do, we do not," he spoke of something all of us can verify in our own experience.

On the one hand we have gay rights advocates insisting that homosexuality is simply a matter of preference or innate direction, and it may in fact not be as simple as all that; on the other hand we have people who insist that this is primarily a matter of morality, and that those who are homosexual are sinners in some way heterosexuals aren't. That Christians over the years have thought and written a great deal of nonsense about sex is undeniable. (I will be accused by some readers, no doubt, of having fallen into that category with this column, and if you think that, to quote H. L. Mencken, you may be right.)

Be that as it may, until we see one another compassionately as common victims of the Fall we miss the tragedy that unites us, and, if we are attentive, turns us (whatever our "sexual orientation," a phrase that looks as small as it should in this context) toward the means of our salvation, which involves the whole of our heart's direction, something much more important than our behavior, or even our sins. □

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CONDOMS, AIDS & CATHOLIC ETHICS

OPEN TO THE TRANSMISSION OF DEATH?

JAMES F. DRANE

At a confidential meeting last year, I consulted with a large number of Catholic bishops and other church leaders from Africa and Latin America who were gathered to explore ways in which the church could help with the AIDS crisis. In some of the African dioceses, HIV infection affects as many as 25 percent of the population, and AIDS has already devastated or threatens to devastate both church and society. The very continuation of life in some dioceses is threatened because young people are afraid to marry or to start a family for fear that they or a partner might carry the disease. In these communities, some of the poorest in the world, even testing for AIDS has been too expensive for national health-care budgets until recently, and even now is not available in some rural areas. In such circumstances, protection against the spread of AIDS becomes extraordinarily difficult.

The bishops clearly want to do something. They know that, especially in the absence of testing, the use of condoms has proved to be the most plausible means of preventing the spread of AIDS. But, given the dominance in the Vatican of highly conservative approaches to sexual ethics, they know that their options are very limited. They were inquiring (and I am here trying to answer) whether the threat of AIDS creates circumstances in which the use of condoms in marital intercourse may sometimes be justified within the context of Catholic moral theory.

To address the question requires, first, a quick review of the elements of that theory; then an application of the theory to the case of condom use, with special attention to the basic approach followed by ultraconservative thinkers who now exercise great influence in the Vatican. The argument may hold little fascination for people not affected by Vatican authority—except that the stakes involved in a successful resolution of the question are extremely high. In my view, the church's credibility and intellectual integrity are at risk. Beyond question, so are human lives, perhaps in great numbers.

Mainstream Catholic ethics—or, more properly, the natural law tradition in morality, since many who are not Catholic follow it in essentials—is rooted in classical Greek philosophy and shares with it an approach to morality that is dependent upon a concept of *physis* or *natura*. Nature for the Greeks was something objective and living which served as the measure for determining right and wrong. *Right* meant harmony with nature; *wrong* was a violation of nature or a lack of harmony. Nature was considered the seat of divinity as well as morality; to go against nature violated both religion and ethics.

The interpretation of *physis* in matters having to do with the body and its functions was the domain of Greek physicians, who were also moralists. They prescribed with authority over every aspect of their patients' bodily lives: food, drink, rest, work, sexual relations, bodily excretions, exercise, sleep, living conditions, and even emotional and psychic states. They did so because all these elements (*res non naturales*) could cause illness, which the physician was obliged to prevent and sometimes cure. Physicians' directives were right when they restored nature to proper functioning or prevented illness in the sense of bodily imbalance. Basic medicine was preventive medicine. Therapeutics aimed at restoring the balance of nature's proper functioning. Only when preventive and rebalancing measures failed did the Greek physician prescribe a *pharmacon* or drug, and only when drugs failed was cutting or surgery considered morally right. Nature, in the sense of the body's natural balance and proper function, was the standard of moral right and wrong.

In both Greek philosophy and Catholic ethics—and more recently among some environmentalists—this standard applies as well outside medicine; technology, for example, is judged right and good according as it promotes nature, brings nature to fulfillment, respects nature's functioning, or imitates nature; it is bad when it violates or destroys the natural order. What is morally right is based not solely on whether the intention of the actor was good but on something more objective, a natural order that exists "out there" and can be studied to discern what may or may not be done to live and act in accord with it.

Acceptance of this basic natural law approach does not preclude disagreement on its application. The classic concepts of *physis* and *natura* lend themselves to widely different understandings, so that, historically, natural law theory has rallied forces for both revolutionary change and reactionary intransigence. Broadly

JAMES F. DRANE *is professor of clinical medical ethics at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania.*

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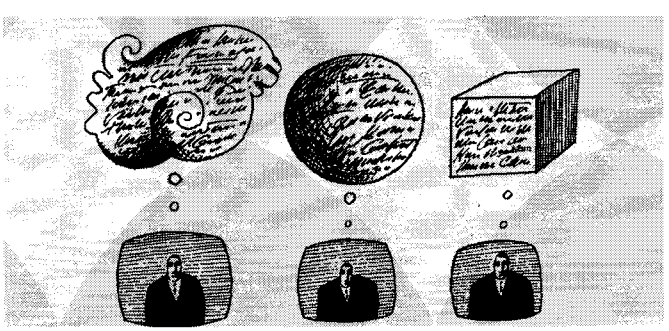
speaking, one school of thought within the tradition (which may be labeled "conservative" or "traditionalist") tends to defend the status quo; its proponents identify *natura* with their memory of the way things had been, and they tend to limit the application of natural law to issues of individual morality. Those called "progressives" are more likely to use natural law to set standards for the way things ought to be according to a natural order more broadly interpreted (a bio-psycho-social reality). Understanding nature to include concepts of a rightly ordered human community, they focus on issues of social justice as well as personal morality.

Where issues of sexual morality such as birth control, homosexuality, and the use of condoms are concerned, the conservatives usually understand nature in a physiological sense and focus on what they understand to be the natural structure and function of individual physiological parts. Those who are more progressive prefer to extend nature to include higher nonphysical functions and focus on "the nature of the person" or "personhood" as the objective standard of morality: A morally right act, for example, would respect the autonomy and uniqueness of other persons or bring one's own personhood to fulfillment.

What holds these differing interpretations together is a conviction that nature itself, and especially human nature, serves as the ground for discerning what is right or wrong. The tradition thus stands over and against both an ethics of pure intention or pure subjectivity and an ethics of good will which links right to rationality.

Although both conservative and progressive Catholic moralists use some version of St. Thomas Aquinas's standards for making moral determinations—the *act*, the *intention*, and the *circumstances*—there are differences of emphasis. Conservatives prefer to focus on "the act," downplaying both intention and circumstance; they fear that giving weight to intention will lead to subjectivism and that consideration of circumstances can foster relativism. Liberals contend that the act itself can be properly described and morally evaluated only by giving careful attention to circumstances. For some, differences of intention sometimes help to determine both the nature of an act and its moral quality.

All these differences of interpretation and emphasis were very much on display in the battle over the morality of birth control that went public with Pope John XXIII's creation in 1963 of a high-level commission to study the issue. A strong majority of the members of the commission (later enlarged by Paul VI) eventually recommended approval of certain contraceptive technologies, viewed now as respectful of nature or aids to a natural procreative process more broadly understood. In the face of an accumulation of expert opinion, however, Pope Paul reaffirmed the traditional teaching in his 1968 encyclical *Humanae vitae*, arguing that only marital acts which physiologically were "left open" to the transmission of life were natural and morally right acts. Decades after the encyclical, the issue continues to split conservative from liberal theologians and for that matter to split the great majority of married Catholics from official church teachings.



In the birth control debate it was largely the existence of the pill that brought a reconsideration of the morality of birth control. Now it is the existence of AIDS—a disease for which there is as yet no cure and which so far appears to be invariably fatal—that urges moralists to consider the relevance of natural law to the use of condoms, now not for birth control but for disease prevention.

The moral question holds little urgency for those "straight" people who think of AIDS as a disease confined to "gays." But in Africa and some other third-world areas, AIDS is a heterosexual disease and transmission is primarily through heterosexual relations. In the U.S. and the rest of the developed world the incidence of AIDS among heterosexuals is already measured in the tens of thousands, and some believe it will rise exponentially. As awareness of this reality spreads, sympathy for AIDS victims may rise, along with fears of personal vulnerability.

Last year, news media reported the death of Ryan White, a young hemophiliac who contracted AIDS through a blood transfusion, and was subjected to meanness and ignominy at school because of his condition. Ryan's suffering helped many people see AIDS as the tragedy it is and not as a divine punishment. Whatever the source of an AIDS victim's infection, however—through transfusions, drug abuse, accidental exposure of health-care workers, or sexual encounters—the medical evidence makes clear that condoms, though they do not give complete protection against sexually transmitted infection, nevertheless prevent disease transmission and offer the best chance for saving millions of lives.

For those Catholic ethicists who dissent from the teaching of *Humanae vitae*, the fact that condoms may serve a contraceptive end does not require that their use for that purpose be proscribed under every set of circumstances, e.g., when the decision to space or prevent births is taken for sound (nonselfish) reasons. The problem is different for more conservative theologians, however, and for bishops appointed by the present pope. For them, it is necessary to show that the use of a condom for disease prevention when sexual relations are licit is different from condom use for contraception. The condom is the same but its function is very different; as different as procreation is different from disease transmission. Used as contraceptives, condoms work by blocking sperm from making contact with the ovum. Used as a disease prevention device, the condom works by blocking the deadly virus from making contact with another's body fluids. The HIV virus that leads to AIDS is carried not by the sperm but by white blood cells or lymphocytes within the seminal fluid or, in less concentration, in the vaginal fluid. A disease barrier is not a procreation barrier even though procreation is indirectly affected.

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To analyze these facts in a hypothetical context, imagine the case of a hemophiliac man who may become infected with the HIV virus through a needed blood transfusion. Both he and his wife need sexual intimacy to maintain their marriage and family. They have a child and would like to have another; they are not antilife nor do they harbor a "contraceptive mentality." But the husband understands his obligation not to infect another person, and the wife knows her right to protect her own life. The hemophiliac never knows whether a transfusion will contain a virus which escaped through a blood test's window of vulnerability. For them, condom use is the only way to prevent infection of the wife or a fetus while nourishing their love and satisfying their sexual needs. Needless to say, this hypothetical situation is duplicated many times over in real life. Thousands of health-care workers are exposed to HIV infection by accidental sticks and splashes, and they need to protect their spouses until they are sure about their own HIV status. Moreover, the moral quality of a decision to protect one's partner from infection would not be affected by changing the material facts. Not to expose another person to harm is the right thing, even if one's own exposure came about through use of a nonsterile needle in drug abuse, or through sexual contact with a male or female prostitute. It is not a Catholic notion that past blameworthy actions narrow the range of permissible future moral choices.

One approach to the moral question is to bring into play the classical principle of double effect; applied to certain situations, over the years it has provided uncontested justification for needed medical procedures that would not otherwise be allowed. For persons infected with the AIDS virus, the act of protecting a partner from deadly harm is a right act which has two effects. As the example just cited shows, it is easy to imagine circumstances in which the contraceptive effect is recognized but regretted. In some sexual relations the condom use itself, as well as the overt, direct, and exclusive intention, is to protect another person from death, or to preserve one's own health, while maintaining family unity through marital intimacy during a difficult time. Achieving these ends through condom use prevents conception as well as infection, but so do certain medical procedures long accepted as entirely licit. Removing an infected uterus, for example, may bring about permanent infertility, but unless that result is directly intended the procedure is acceptable under natural law theory as it is understood by both conservative and progressive interpreters. In the case of AIDS there is no procedure, medical or surgical, which can cure the disease, only a procedure to prevent its spread. But preventive medicine is as valid as therapeutic medicine; in fact, it is generally more respectful of the body's natural mechanisms. Condom use too removes or inhibits transmission of an infectious agent; in some circumstances, it enhances and strengthens *physis* and *natura* in the sense of supporting nature's own preventive strategies—when ordinarily protective immunological mechanisms are too weak to create their own barriers against infection.

Along with intention, circumstance (including consequences) is all important for the description and definition of acts and their moral evaluation. Using a condom to prevent the spread of infection may superficially appear to be the same act as using a condom with contraceptive intent. Obviously, the condom is the same. But pulling the trigger of a deadly weapon in order to commit murder and pulling the same trigger of the same gun in self-defense against a murderous assailant, though physically identical and employing the same device, are not the same. One fragment of a complex human behavior does not define the whole behavior. Murder involves much more than killing. Murder is always wrong and in some cultures punishable by death; killing in self-defense, however tragic, is morally justifiable and not punishable at all. Once it is recognized that circumstances enter into the definition and the moral evaluation of actions, then for persons with every right to have sexual relations, condom use is not merely justifiable but obligatory. Conception is not the same as infection, and protecting against one is different from protecting against the other. The device used in both cases is the same, just as the weapon may be the same in acts of self-defense and murder. But the act is different: different elements of the behavior constitute its definition. If circumstances or context alter act description and definition, and they do, then moral evaluation also changes. This argument concludes that, in some circumstances, condom use qualifies as a right, sensitive, respectful, and nonmaleficent act.

Even traditionalists who continue to consider condom use evil, regardless of intention and circumstances, must take into account the moral obligation to prefer a lesser evil when the choice is between two evils. For centuries moral theology tracts

Timothy Hodor

The Rag Man in the Vatican

Like Michelangelo
In the Sistine Chapel,
I lie on my back,
Trying to connect God to man:
Sometimes I feel an arm's length from God,
Yet, my scaffolding's shaky. One day,
I paint smooth strokes of religion and afterlife;
The next, my tools undergo transformations.
I lose hold of faith and the future,
But continue to work—to paint over
Or to touch up my beliefs.
My whole life, I've drained myself,
Reaching to unite human fingers of concrete
To immortal palms of abstraction.
I turn away from the ceiling.
My mind conceives a picture on the wall:
It's the Last Judgment.
God has already dug
His fingers through my soul.
My face hangs like tattered dough.

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have provided examples of choosing the lesser of two evils. If someone has already decided to take another person's life, it was always considered proper (for example) to encourage killing his cow or setting his barn afire instead. If an infected person is going to go on having otherwise licit sexual relations, then the lesser evil would be protective sex. Even if unmarried persons have decided to have sexual relations and one is infected, it would be doubly wrong not to use a condom. A lesser hurt, a lesser damage, a lesser violation has always been considered morally acceptable when the alternative is much worse—and surely the use of a condom is less wrong than infecting another person with a lethal disease.

Such arguments, however cogent they may appear to many lay Catholics, have not won acceptance or even acknowledgment at the Vatican or, to my knowledge, from many in the Catholic hierarchy. Consider the relatively moderate statement, "The Many Faces of AIDS: A Gospel Response," issued in 1987 by the administrative board of the United States Catholic Conference, and some of the reactions it engendered. Its section on preventing the spread of AIDS contained the following modest paragraph:

> Because we live in a pluralistic society, we acknowledge that some will not agree with our understanding of human sexuality. We recognize that public educational programs addressed to a wide audience will reflect the fact that some people will not act as they can and should; that they will not refrain from the type of sexual or drug-abuse behavior that can transmit AIDS. In such a situation, educational efforts, if grounded in the broader moral vision outlined above, could include accurate information about prophylactic devices or other practices proposed by some medical experts as potential means of preventing AIDS. We are not promoting the use of prophylactics, but merely providing information that is part of the factual picture. Such a factual presentation should indicate that abstinence outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage are the only morally correct and medically sure ways to prevent the spread of AIDS. So-called safe sex practices are at best only partially effective. They do not take into account either the real values that are at stake or the fundamental good of the human person.

It seems conceivable that the episcopal authors of the statement were influenced by their acceptance of pluralism, reflected in the abandonment many years ago of church efforts to keep on the books state laws forbidding the sale of contraceptives. In any case, the statement in no way departed from official teaching on sexual morality. It said nothing, for example, about the situation of a faithful husband or wife accidentally exposed to and infected by the HIV virus. From its silence it would appear to follow that Catholic couples in such circumstances are required to choose between perpetual celibacy and a high risk of fatal infection. And yet, referring to the document, Cardinal John Krol and Archbishop Anthony Bevilacqua said that "some have even suggested that Catholic moral teaching on the use of contraceptives may no longer be as firm as it was in the past." The bishops of metropolitan Washington, also in response to the statement of the administrative board, issued their own statement condemning condoms absolutely. In their words, "it is never morally permissible to employ an intrinsically evil means to achieve a good purpose."

This is at best an abuse of language, and a serious one. The phrase "intrinsically evil" is properly used only to describe the most repugnant acts, so repugnant that they could never be justified, no matter what the circumstances, or no matter what beneficial consequences might result from performing them. (It is interesting that the phrase is most often used in matters of sexuality: not for nuclear war, not for willful large-scale destruction of the environment, not for the death penalty.) Some Catholic leaders are so careless as to appear to describe the condom itself as "intrinsically evil." How can a piece of latex be intrinsically evil? For that matter, is it possible to describe a loving and love-affirming sexual act with a condom between a married man and wife in the circumstances described here as intrinsically evil—that is, to place it in the same category with acts that are unimaginably and irredeemably evil? It is not possible, I suggest, in any assessment faithful to the natural law tradition grounded in rational analysis of behavior *within a context*. It is possible only for ideologues or their too-faithful disciples. And there is in fact an ideology at work here, one held by some theologians and others who occupy influential positions in the church. It might be called ethical fundamentalism.

A biblical fundamentalist does not consider the context of a scriptural passage (its literary mode, purpose, relationship to other passages, or to the whole work in which it appears), and consequently may adopt interpretations that are both dogmatic and irrational. If a biblical text says that "God is a rock," the fundamentalist if pressed for interpretation may insist on a literal meaning: "If it says, 'God is a rock,' who are you to say otherwise?" The Catholic tradition, both in biblical exegesis and moral philosophy, requires consideration of context and rejects mindless, unreflecting, literal interpretation. The notion that a condom is a condom and no context would ever justify its use reflects the same mindset which insists that God is a rock, and that a rock is a rock: a mindset far removed from the Catholic tradition. And yet just such irrationality has become identified with the Catholic church in many people's minds because of uncareful pronouncements on sexual matters. Such stands serve to undermine the reasonableness of religion at a time when the church must compete with a host of secular meaning systems. In the case of condom use, fundamentalist stands also inhibit important efforts to control the spread of AIDS. One must look to church politics and to the grip of radically fundamentalist views in some quarters to explain this scandal.

A significant example of extremism in high places has been cited in these pages earlier (Bernard Häring, "Building the Creative Conscience," *Commonweal*, August 11, 1989). It is the case of Monsignor Carlo Caffarra, a close consultant of Pope John Paul II and widely considered to be his "point man" on matters of sexual morality

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and the family. He heads an institute founded by the pope at the Lateran University dedicated to research on family matters. His viewpoints on a range of issues came through clearly in a long personal interview (three full pages of small print) published in the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* last April.

Monsignor Caffarra sees the church as involved in a death struggle with the modern world; for him it is a struggle between good and evil. Again and again he refers to the modern technological world as the "corrupt empire," a phrase reminiscent of the rhetoric of Ronald Reagan—except that Caffarra wraps both Marxist and capitalist societies in the same diabolical cloak. Contemporary European culture he refers to as "the great lie"; Catholic priests and theologians who disagree with his view he calls "priests and theologians of the corrupt empire."

The motor driving the corrupt empire, in Caffarra's view, is technology. "The law of the machine, which is the law of matter," he believes, "is being applied by man to himself and it will reduce him to slavery." It follows that he levels an absolute condemnation against any technological means of family limitation. Birth control, reproductive technologies, abortion are lumped together; all are symbolic of the evil modern culture. To speak of using contraception to avoid abortion makes no sense, for the two are inseparable: "Contraception is the first step toward abortion." People who use the "natural" birth control method, he believes, will keep a child that happens to be conceived, but if contraceptive technologies are used, an unexpected pregnancy is terminated by abortion.

Caffarra's views on AIDS are predictable. Like all other technologies which "interfere with nature," condoms are evil; they "belong to the culture aligned with death and make death man's friend instead of his principal enemy." Diffusing information about the use of condoms to prevent HIV infection not only increases homosexual relations but actually serves to spread AIDS—a truth, for Caffarra, that is never mentioned in the media, and "woe to him who mentions it." All this accords with the prism of categories—black and white, good and evil, God or the devil—through which he sees the world. Faust, Mephistopheles, the Antichrist, Wagner, Marxism, modernity, utilitarianism, nihilism: Caffarra resorts to these names and concepts again and again in his commentary on sexuality, the family, and the modern world.

This is an astonishing mindset, and one that is frightening in a man who influences church teachings. Similar views, expressing a siege mentality in approaching the modern world, can be found in pronouncements from other church leaders, though couched in less apocalyptic terms. Democratic values and respect for diversity are viewed with suspicion; when they are seen to be permeating the church, frightened traditionalists direct their energies not to dialogue with faithful Catholics who cannot in conscience accept their radically negative evaluations, but to simple repression.

As already noted, however, the consequences that may follow from applying a fundamentalist ethics to the case of condom use for prevention of AIDS infection are simply unacceptable. The unreasonableness of the prohibition on condom use is evident enough in the case of the hemophiliac marriage or the accidentally infected health-care worker. To say that marital acts performed by such persons must be "open to the transmission of life" is to require that they must also be open to the transmission of death. To hold that the only acceptable alternative is sexual abstinence condemns a person already under sentence of death to abjure not only the pleasures of sex but the consolation of total intimacy in a time of ultimate stress, and to require the same of his or her partner in marriage.

In societies where the AIDS virus has created a plague, it becomes yet more irrational to view the use of condoms as always evil, and "intrinsically" so, without regard to intention, circumstance, and/the character of the act. Does the church, which rightfully prides itself as standing on the side of life, stand by and observe the dissolution of life in parts of Africa and Latin America? One way to continue human life in threatened areas is to permit couples in the first period of their marriage to make use of the condom until they can be certain that they are free of infection, and only then to start their families. The condom in such situations is not an antiprocreative device but the precise opposite. Used as a temporary protection against possible infection, it serves as preventive medicine, as well as the only plausible and practical way to help assure that children, when they do come, remain uninfected.

It is my hope that this comment on Catholic moral theory, setting forth as it does the possibility of justifying condom use in certain situations, will help some friends in Africa and Latin America to do what common sense indicates they must, in their oftentimes tragic circumstances. If a vaccine or a cure for AIDS is found and made available globally, there will be plenty of time for further academic analyses of sexual morality in professional journals. For now, something has to be done to control the spread of AIDS. The use of condoms for that purpose appears fully justified within the Catholic natural law tradition. □

SCREEN

TWO SWASHBUCKLERS

'CYRANO' & 'HAMLET'

Franco Zeffirelli and Jean-Paul Rappeneau have obviously been living for a long time with the classic plays that they have turned into films. The Italian director has mounted *Hamlet* on stage more than once, and Rappeneau has declared in interviews that a filming of *Cyrano de Bergerac* had long been a dream of his. And just as a person, throughout many years of a marriage, may know many aspects of a spouse's personality without ever grasping some central fact of his or her nature, so may a director be able to understand and illuminate odd corners and byways of a familiar text but also neglect to give his production a firm center. Both of these adaptations are handsomely mounted, well acted, and filled with inventive business. Both have strenuous displays of swordsmanship choreographed by cinema's greatest

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master-at-arms, William Hobbes. Both have supporting casts that perform more successfully than the lead. And both movies betray a certain vagueness of conception only partly mitigated by rich detail.

Not that there is anything vague about Gerard Depardieu, the French film's lead. His conception of Cyrano is limited, his execution rather monotonous; but Depardieu is most definitely *there*, not only dominating the movie but seeming almost to generate it, as if the hustle and bustle of the action flowed from the actor's impetuous nature. Depardieu's Cyrano is not only a man of Nose but of Chest and Belly as well. When Depardieu silences the crowd that protests his dismissal of Montfleury from the stage, it is not with the lofty contempt and icy menace that Jose Ferrer employed in the American adaptation, but by sheer, battering-ram force. This Cyrano is an amiable blusterer, a hurtling lout whose physique suggests not so much a swordsman as a promising candidate for the Yugoslavian Olympic weightlifting team. Depardieu's voice, inexhaustible yet always on the verge of hoarseness, tears through Edmond Rostand's couplets as if it were trying to bowl the rhymes over. The actor's energy drives the movie forward but often threatens to wreck it. When Depardieu hustles Roxane's *duenna* away from his tryst with her lady, it is with the same degree of force with which he duels or makes war.

That is what's wrong with this Cyrano. It's an unmodulated performance. Depardieu charges through almost every scene in the play, giving himself no time to suggest those aspects of Cyrano's character that Rostand took such pains to establish: Cyrano the lover, the wit, the poet, the social critic, and above all, Cyrano the noticer. Sometimes his noticing has violent results, as when he spies people staring at his nose. But Cyrano is also a noticer of the most elusive of his beloved's charms, of the generosity of the pastrycook Ragueneau, of the wonders of the solar system, of the vulnerability of the inarticulate Christian. But Depardieu's Cyrano is so precipitate that he seems to notice nothing. Therefore, this Cyrano cannot convince us that he is a poet, for what is a poet but a noticer *par excellence*? Depardieu's characterization, though vivid, is a hulking reduction of what Rostand imagined.

The rest of the cast is perfection, and Rappeneau shows his love of the play in many details of staging: the clear division of the audience in the opening scene into aristocrats, commoners, academy members, bluestockings; the way the brave but self-destructive Ligniere lights up when he quotes the very satire that has launched him into mortal danger; the charming nook where the chef-poet can versify above the frying pans and pots. But few other images stick in the mind since Rappeneau's camera hurtles through the settings as furiously as his leading actor.

Rappeneau takes a very minor character from the play, a little middle-class boy awestruck by Cyrano's bravado in the opening scene, and has this child reappear throughout the first half of the movie, always worshiping the poet-swordsman from afar (and constantly getting a friendly nod or a pat on the head). Is this little boy Rappeneau? Did he fall in love with the swash-buckling aspects of Rostand's mercurial play when he was a child, and did his childish impression freeze, never changing

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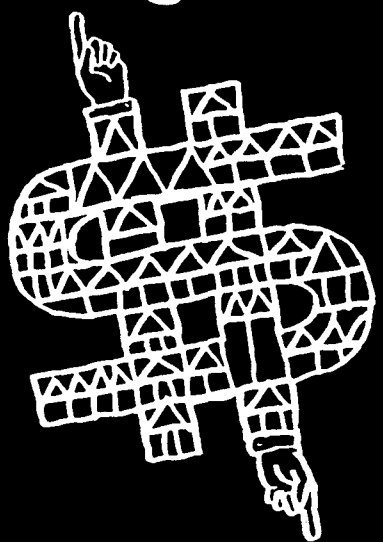

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over the years? There's more to *Cyrano* than the clash of swords. But kids are notoriously bored by love scenes and flights of lyricism. And it is the prominent love story and the all-pervasive lyricism of *Cyrano* that are scanted in this adaptation. No amount of cannonfire and shouting can fill this void.

The void in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* is Mel Gibson, but I'm not about to launch into a diatribe against this fine actor. Gibson, in the course of his curious career, has played both swashbuckling heroes (*Mad Max*, etc.) and introspective men (the journalist in *The Year of Living Dangerously*) equally well. Perhaps Zeffirelli cast him in the hope that Hamlet, obsessive thinker and flashy swordsman, was exactly the role that would join the usually segregated parts of Gibson's talent into a splendid whole.

It hasn't happened. Gibson is basically a colloquial actor who hasn't the vocal or emotional equipment for this part. He is dashing and dangerous in the swordplay scenes (in the concluding duel with Laertes, he becomes Muhammed Ali as he literally runs circles around his opponent), and he makes a reasonable attempt to look introspective or at least subdued, during the soliloquies. But the actor fit to play Hamlet is precisely that actor who can be dashing and dangerous *while thinking*. What made Richard Burton, Christopher Plummer, and Nicol Williamson, each in his own very different way, a remarkable Hamlet was the fact that each could make words cut, into others, into himself. Gibson's Prince makes incisions only with cold steel.

So, no great Hamlet to listen to, but what a great Elsinore Zeffirelli's camera tours! It is a castle-town in which all citizens live either behind its walls or within its shadow. What we now call "image" is as important for the rulers of this medieval place as it is for our leaders, and for the same reason: the leaders are nearly always in public view. There's privacy in the bedchamber but soldiers are posted wherever the royal ones walk, peasants are bringing their goods to market in the courtyard below, strolling players come to pay their respects to the royal family before they perform elsewhere. Gertrude is not only Hamlet's mother but the matriarchal figure for the whole town. She doesn't conceal her desire for Claudius but displays it openly, making it an endorsement of his right to the throne. Hamlet watches his mother "work the crowd" with her smiles and her embraces of the new king, and he burns.

Zeffirelli uses the architectures of the castle to create suspense. As the Ghost ascends some steps to the battlements, the upper part of his body is momentarily blocked from Hamlet's view by an arch and this is somehow alarming as if a headless ghost were more dreadful than a completely viewed apparition. When Hamlet does reach the battlements, the Ghost has vanished and, while Gibson looks fearfully about, we brace ourselves for the inevitable moment when the spirit reappears. It's a horror movie effect, but it works. And since the Ghost is magnificently embodied (yes, *embodied* quite solidly) by iron-voiced Paul Scofield, the ghostly interview gives us a glimpse into a past where ghosts were as real as men.

Alan Bates is fittingly self-satisfied as Claudius but not dangerous enough. Ian Holm's Polonius, curiously enough, emanates more danger than either Hamlet or Claudius in the form of a badgering curiosity that can leave no relationship unmolested. Glenn Close is wonderful as Gertrude: sexy, foolish, magnetic. Her shrinking into herself after the closet scene is deftly done and helps explain her subsequent behavior toward both her husband and son. And Helena Bonham-Carter as Ophelia gives the best performance in the film. Repellently amateurish in *A Room with a View*, this actress here reveals a powerful, dusky voice and formidable acting intelligence. She plays Ophelia's madness as a species of anger. She lowers her head like some impossibly delicate bull and charges directly at the damned aristocrats who have deprived her of family, reputation, love.

Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* is a remarkable movie, but it is also that infuriating paradox of paradoxes: Hamlet without the Prince.

RICHARD ALLEVA

STAGE

WORKING-CLASS LIVES

'SUM' & 'PILL HILL'

David Steven's *The Sum of Us* has settled into a comfortable run off-Broadway. Both the play, which has come to New York by way of Williamstown and Los Angeles, and the author are peripatetic. Stevens has worked in England, New Zealand, Australia, and now lives in California, but he is generally considered an Australian writer and director. This play is set in an industrial suburb of Melbourne.

The play is about a working-class family, a randy widower and his homosexual son. They have a close, bantering, bickering relationship, a fondness for one another that never makes up for their individual loneliness, the need for another kind of love. Jeff, the young man, has no taste for one-night stands, but his shyness and his awkward eagerness, or his father, have a way of pushing away potential long-term companions. The main conceit of the play is that the father is so intent on seeing his son happy that—like a mother courting her daughter's courter—he is overly cordial and in his acceptance of his son's sexuality somewhat unnerving to a young man used to his own disapproving father.

The Sum of Us is a comedy of simple or of almost no design. Its humorous heart lies in the conversations between Jeff and Dad—in Australian working-class slang—and in direct chats with the audience that do away with the need for dramatizing much of the material. There are only two real scenes. In one, Jeff brings Greg home for the night, hoping for something more, but Dad comes in, joins them for a beer or several, and talks to death the romance he wants to help succeed. In the second act, Dad proposes to Joyce, a woman whom he has been seeing (they met through a dating service), but her initial joy in the offer is lost in her discovery that her prospective son-in-law is gay. It looks as though Jeff and Dad will be left with only one another—a

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prospect darkened when Dad is invalided by a stroke—but at the end Greg reappears, and Jeff and the audience are left with the possibility of what in *The Sum of Us* passes for a happy ending.

Although the problems facing the characters are essentially serious—or would be in other circumstances—the play is primarily an amiable exercise demanding very little emotional response from playgoers. Even the father's paralysis is tempered by the actor's stepping out of the wheelchair to speak to the audience. There are some very effective things in *Sum*: prim Joyce's sudden wriggle of pleasure when she still sees marriage on the horizon, and Dad's inability to tear himself away from the would-be lovers, his attempt to smooth Jeff's way having become confused with his own need for company. For the most part, however, the play moves along easily, carrying the willing audience with it.

Sam Kelly's *Pill Hill*, which I saw in a production at the Philadelphia Theatre Company, was first done as part of the Yale Repertory's 1990 Winterfest. Another working-class play—an upward mobility one—it concerns six blacks who work or have worked in a Chicago steel mill. It consists of three acts and the gathering of a group of friends at five-year intervals. Most of the action takes place offstage and is recounted as narrative. For the older generation, of which there is one member in the group, the mill has been a desirable destination, one that rescued them from field work in the South and gave them the middle-class rewards of salary, home, and security. For the younger men, it is a dead end, literally, since the mill is scheduled to close at the end of the play. By that time, Ed has become a lawyer with what I would call a prestigious real estate firm if I used fake words like *prestigious*; Tony has become a successful real estate man; Al, the hustler, has moved from selling Bibles and encyclopedias to selling something that makes it possible for him to buy a home on Pill Hill, where the black elite live; Scott is a successful drug dealer, for the moment; Charlie, the older man, has retired and is ready to move back to Mississippi. Joe, the central figure in the piece (well performed by A. Bernard Cummings), has gone nowhere. In the early acts, he talks enthusiastically about what he will do as soon as he gets a paycheck or two ahead, but he resists Ed's attempts to get him to quit the mill, to sign an application for college. At the end, he is drinking heavily and is about to move—temporarily, of course—to a welfare hotel, a victim, he suggests, not of society but of his own inability to take the risk.

There is much talk of cars and clothes and houses, of the artifacts of success, but underlying the play is the assumption that black success is always marginal in a white-controlled world. Charlie may be better-off than he was in the Mississippi of threatening sheriffs who humiliated him, but his bosses at the mill, who congratulated him verbally, never provided him written recommendations strong enough to give him the advancement he expected. Tony discovers that his new affluence will not protect him from the daily battle against prejudice in the real estate business. Ed comes to see his position in the law firm as the equivalent of Charlie's in the mill—doing the white man's dirty work. He has been given a case in which he must defend a company against a class-action suit from mostly black workers, and he knows that refusal to take the case will ruin his prospects in the firm while taking it will violate the memory of his father, dead in his forties in the mill, and of the world he once lived in. There is an oddly ambiguous ending to the play. Ed and Joe are left onstage alone. As Ed leaves, Joe says, "Take me with you," and Ed answers, "Where I am going I can't take you." That line could mean that he is staying with the firm, denying all the Joes, or that he is going to mail the resignation he has already written, which means that he will destroy his image as the superachiever in the group, robbing Joe of the dream that he represents. Joe is left alone, staring into space.

There is vigor in the cross-talk of the scenes, but the characters are too much functional representative figures, the action almost all retrospective. *Pill Hill* has its virtues, but mainly it shows the strong promise of Sam Kelly as a playwright. But, then, that is what the Winterfest plays are for.

GERALD WEALES

MEDIA

SUNDAY WITH DAVID

A SABBATH OF SORTS

Ever notice—not, please God, to sound like Andy Rooney—but ever notice that Sunday always *feels* like Sunday? It's entirely subjective, of course, but there's a difference about the day: as if light itself were moving just a little slower than its assigned velocity, and hence so is everything else. Even if you're the kind of hardnosed secularist who snorts at ritual, the Sabbath, and all that, the day just forces you to behave that way, anyhow.

So Sunday always involves 9:30 Mass (thanks to my wife, who doesn't believe that getting up before 10 A.M. on that day is a major cause of cancer); steak and eggs and Heinekens at Carrow's (we always just beat out the Methodists because their sermons—heh heh—are longer); and then "This Week with David Brinkley." In the order of service, *only* the steak and eggs are optional.

I suppose I could adjust to Sunday without "Brinkley," which is the way all true cultists refer to it: but it would be a wrench. Walt Whitman would have understood. Walt, who would have made a great TV critic, believed that a democratic, materialist society would eventually produce rites and observances as powerful and satisfying as those of the "dead" religions of the past. *Leaves of Grass*, after all, is nothing if not his heroically arrogant attempt to write the epic poem of that new mythology. "Brinkley," I want to suggest, is the nearly ideal enactment—in its limitations as well as its brilliance—of that hoped-for secular sacrament, the assertion that you shall understand the news, and the news will set you free.

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Think about the full title: *this* week *with* David Brinkley. The very phrasing is sabbatical. It's not exactly a "news" show, because it's about what happened for the last six days, and now we pause to meditate upon its significance. Unlike the "Evening News" or "Nightline," it imposes regularity on history (which, as we know, does not observe the Sabbath). As the Bangles put it, "Sunday, that's my fun day, I don't have to run day." But it's not just a "talk" show—isn't that a weird term?—either. Oprah and Phil and Geraldo can jam about transvestite Rosicrucians or (ahem!) get their noses broken on the air just in time for sweeps week. But this is *this* week: a stately and predictable observance and analysis of the events—the "text"—of the previous six days of the circling earth. Sound familiar, liturgy buffs?

It should. Remember that the cuddliest of our Founding Fathers was a Philadelphia newspaperman, and that from Thomas Paine and the *Federalist Papers* through Greeley, Winchell, and Cronkite, the journalist has been an iconic figure in our culture, the man we expect to be just a *little* better and smarter than the rest of us, and to implement our wisdom and wishes against the deeply mistrusted maneuvers of big government. Newsman, in fact, was the only regular job Whitman himself ever had.

It's pretty much a truism in comparative religion that kerygma precedes liturgy and liturgy usually precedes myth. That is, first comes the electrifying revelation of the new truth, then comes a public service to celebrate the new truth, and *then* comes an official story about how the new truth came to be revealed.

In terms of the American religion of the journalist, I'd say that the kerygma—the "good news"—is the elevation of the figure to secular sainthood that begins with Benjamin Franklin; that the liturgy is the gradual elevation of the First Amendment into the First Commandment, with the daily paper and then the daily broadcast becoming a central feature of our common life (*Citizen Kane*, seen this way, is actually a Faust story about the betrayal of the holy things); and that the full flowering of the mythology is in the mystique of TV news.

"Brinkley," to be sure, is a consistently intelligent validation of the immense sums of money poured into network news. Maybe only the MacNeil-Lehrer report on PBS surpasses it in informational nutrition—on which scale, by the way, something like "Sixty Minutes" is TV-dinner lasagna and the "McLaughlin Group" is, of course, a Pop-Tart. But what makes it special is not its smartness as much as its intellectual choreography. Each week, whatever the topic—war in the Gulf, the S&L debacle, the autodestruction of *perestroika*—it reenacts the crucial and (copies to George Bush) *liberal* myth of the American religion of journalism: that open discussion of public issues by serious men and women will and *must* lead to enlightenment. I wonder how many Americans understand what a breathtaking act of faith that is: at the same time I insist loudly and often that we were *in the wrong* in the Persian Gulf, I remind myself that if I had said something similar in Iraq, I would probably have been, by sundown, minus a tongue or a hand.

So the topic of the week is, let's say, the "Proper" of the show, and the conduct of the show is its "Ordinary": and if you've read enough of these columns, you know that I don't do blasphemy—not even for a gag. And not only does the show have a Proper and an Ordinary, it has an *Introit*, a *Dismissio*, and a permanent *Ordo celebrationis* (golly, it feels good to be using Latin terms again!).

The first ten minutes are always taken up with David reading us "news since the Sunday papers"—this show *knows* it's sabbatical—and then with a brief background report on the day's theme. There follow two discussions with distinguished people—players—like, say, Dick Cheney, Boris Yelstin, or on a slow day Henry Kissinger, confronting, usually, David, Sam Donaldson, and George Will. Last big commercial break: after which David, Sam, George, and another reporter (Cokie Roberts, Hodding Carter, Tom Wicker, like that) sit around and discuss either what the "important" people have said in the body of the show, or other things Brinkley throws at them. *Last* commercial break, and then Brinkley comes back on to tell, usually, a one-minute joke about something remarkably stupid that occurred in Washington that week. Aaaand—*out*!

Never mind that Wicker is underused, or that Roberts—who seems brighter and tougher than either Sam or George—is consistently chauvinized as those two try to work out their estrus crises. (Won't she *ever* try to get a word in edgewise?) The operative concept here is the number four.

There are always three journalists—David, Sam, and George—confronting one "official" spokesman, the assumption being, presumably, that "the people"—the journalists—need these odds to face up to the Shadow of Authority (make no mistake about that: every interview on "Brinkley" is, when you break it all down, a conversation with Darth Vader). And the three journalists are wonderfully well-cast by now: Brinkley, ironic, wise, and shining with the look of having seen it all before; Sam the trifle-too-loud-and-impulsive, always ready to ask the rude question but sometimes willing to ask it when it is in fact unnecessary; and George the prissy, the one you always remember wearing a bow tie even if he *wasn't* wearing a bow tie, the difficult male schoolmarm. Gifted-with-vision Luke, swashbuckling Han Solo, and uptight Princess Leia: there they all are. If I had the space to explain Jungian psychology I could tell you why this makes perfect sense: but you know it does already, and that is why Jungian psychology works in the first place. "Brinkley" is an archaic ritual imposed upon history and its end is to reassure us that we are in control of the chaotic events of our times.

There's only one thing wrong with this elegant rite, and that is that it is not human. Intelligence, irony, wit, and disengagement are the values of the liberal mind. And information is an unqualified good, and the contrast of opposing views is the stuff of which civilization is made. And one dead Iraqi child or one slain American brother or sister, by their mute existence, toss most of that into the dustbin of rationalizations of the unspeakable. (Sorry, Mr. Will.) The problem with the exaltation of "news and analysis" is that it often excludes the moral weight of what is actually going on. And the problem with the American religion of the journalist is that we believe—poor trusting kids—that if we just *knew* everything we could *deal with* everything. But information is no substitute for wisdom—or love.

And that, I say with a sigh, is why I wind up getting up for 9:30 Mass every Sunday.

FRANK McCONNELL

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Responding to the needs of our times

JOY MILOS

Recovering the voices of women in the history of Christian spirituality has proved challenging, primarily because so few either have been preserved or, if preserved, taken seriously. When one discovers a woman who speaks credibly of the encounter with God, the process that such encounter initiates, and the consequences in life that it generates, one rejoices. Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941) is such a woman. The authenticity of her personal journey with which so many of her readers and listeners identified earlier in this century, accounts for her attractiveness.

Born in London to a less than ardent Anglican family, Underhill's future career as "spiritual director to her generation" seemed an unlikely one. As the child of a prominent London barrister and his wife, she admitted that she "wasn't brought up to religion really—except in just a formal way." After a period of eight or nine years when she believed herself to be an atheist and a later dabbling in the Hermetic Society of the Golden Dawn, a secret occult order, she eventually felt drawn to Christianity. This call was confirmed during a personal retreat in 1907, and yet, because she was sure that Roman Catholicism was to be her true home (even though she had yet to come to a clear appreciation of Christian beliefs and practice), she faced considerable turmoil as she confronted two significant obstacles.

Both the objections of her fiancé and the outbreak of the Modernist crisis in Catholicism temporarily halted Underhill's enthusiasm for an institutional religious commitment. Hubert Stuart Moore, the childhood sweetheart whom she married in 1907, had serious reservations about Catholicism, especially sacramental confession. That same year Pius X condemned the multi-faceted attempts of many theologians to reconcile traditional teachings with modernity. His decree *Lamentabili* and later encyclical, *Pascendi gregis*, censured intellectual positions with which Underhill identified. In light of both problems, she temporarily halted a formal conversion to Roman Catholicism, for as she wrote, "I can't get in without suppressions and evasions to which I can't quite bring myself." The intellectual and religious integrity which prevented her affiliation proved providential in retrospect. Had she committed herself to early twentieth-century Catholicism, she would have found neither the freedom nor the arena for developing the gifts she so evidently possessed.

The dilemma of what path to follow eventually brought her to discover the great mystics of the past as knowledgeable companions on her complicated journey. From the struggles to understand both her own and their experiences emerged her first religious classic, *Mysticism* (1911), a work reprinted and edited several times, and one that has been in continuous print since then. A shorter work, *Practical Mysticism* (1914) further popularized Underhill as a religious writer, one who advocated mysticism for "normal people." For the next several years the topic of mysticism preoccupied Underhill's studies and writing as was evident in several additional books and numerous articles on the topic.

In 1921 Oxford University recognized the contribution Underhill had already made to the religious dialogue of the times by inviting her to offer the prestigious Upton lectures. She was the first woman to be so honored. She also made two major decisions around this same time: the first, opting for formal recommitment and involvement in the Anglican church, and the second, choosing Baron Friedrich von Hügel, the noted lay Catholic theologian, as her spiritual director. Both decisions led her into the religious mainstream and further focused her writings and career. Underhill began presenting retreats, most

Books Discussed in this Essay

The Ways of the Spirit, *Evelyn Underhill, edited by Grace Adolphsen Brame, Crossroad, $19.95, 247 pp.*

Evelyn Underhill: Artist of the Infinite Life, *Dana Greene, Crossroad, $18.95, 179 pp.*

JOY MILOS, C.S.J., *teaches at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.*

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often to groups of women or clergy, another first, especially for a woman basically self-educated in theology and spirituality. The topics of books and articles broadened from a preoccupation with mysticism to an exploration of the spiritual life. As her contact with her contemporaries expanded, so did her understanding of the varieties of paths that individuals take to God. What she learned she taught. Several of her retreat conferences were later published as books.

In her recent researching of the Underhill archives, Grace Adolphsen Brame made the serendipitous discovery of several of Underhill's previously unpublished retreats, all from the transition years of the later 1920s. Edited from Underhill's handwritten notebooks, *The Ways of the Spirit* includes four retreats that had been presumed lost. In her introduction, Brame briefly surveys Underhill's career, recounts her own process of recovering the notebooks, summarizes the significance and major themes of the 1924, 1925, 1927, and 1928 presentations, and reconstructs what the experience of being on retreat with Evelyn Underhill would have been like. The writings themselves embody themes and issues which preoccupied Underhill for the remainder of her life. They do so in her characteristic style, that is, one embracing a homey familiarity and imagery, a depth of insight into the mystery of God in the midst of ordinary life, and a clear integration of the riches of past spiritual traditions and present human experience.

Each year Underhill typically prepared one set of retreat talks which she offered to a number of groups throughout that year. Each set of talks revolved around a particular theme. The newly discovered works focus on "Sanctity: The Perfection of Love," "The End for Which We Were Made," "Inner Grace and Outward Sign," and "The Call of God," titles suggested by the content of her presentations. These works are particularly significant since they were written at a critical transition period in Underhill's personal and theological development. According to a friend and biographer of Underhill, Margaret Cropper, all of the books of the last fifteen years of her life were based on these early retreats. Thus, for anyone wishing to explore Underhill's personal evolution of mind and spirit, these retreats provide major insights.

As contemporary spiritual reading, they provide still valid formulations of many of the perennial concerns regarding the quest for God. Today's readers may take exception to some of the more dated theological language and tone, but overall, there is a certain timeless quality to her writing. Underhill predates Vatican II's "Universal call to holiness," always assuming that as a given. The centrality of God and an attitude of adoration will, she contends, always overflow into redemptive service and prayer for others. An overriding common sense and gentleness color all her presentations. Sentimental pietism and a religiosity that rules out lifelong growth in all areas of life were clearly incompatible with her vision of holiness.

As the authenticity of her insight and the depth of her scholarship matured, Underhill attracted other spiritual searchers as retreatants, lecture audiences, and spiritual directees. She served as religious book review editor for the *Spectator* and *Time and Tide*. She was awarded a Doctor of Divinity from Aberdeen University and became a Fellow of King's College, London. In addition to her writings, she was a much sought-after speaker among a wide range of religious and educational groups and even addressed a series of radio talks to the nation. Her final classic, *Worship* (1936), embodied an ecumenical perspective prophetic of attitudes that would follow decades later. After years of carefully avoiding political controversies, Underhill died a confirmed pacifist, having criticized the nation's bishops for not having taken a similar stance. Michael Ramsey, former archbishop of Canterbury, claimed that Underhill had contributed more than anyone else in her era to keeping alive the spiritual life of the Anglican church. Her life clearly unfolded in response to the needs of her times.

> ***The connection between real holiness and homeliness is a very close one. Sanctity comes right down to and through all the simplicities of human life, and indeed would be of no use to us unless it did so.***
>
> —Evelyn Underhill
> *The Ways of the Spirit*

Books by Evelyn Underhill published by Morehouse Publishing

The School of Charity: Meditations on the Christian Creed, *$8.95, 124 pp.*
The Mystery of Sacrifice: A Meditation on the Liturgy, *$7.95, 96 pp.*
Mystics of the Church, *$11.95, 260 pp.*
An Anthology of the Love of God, *$10.95, 220 pp.*
Abba, *$2.95, 64 pp.*
Light of Christ, *$2.95, 64 pp.*
The Spiritual Life, *$5.95, 128 pp.*
The Fruits of the Spirit, *$5.95, 64 pp.*
Lent with Evelyn Underhill, *George Mellick Belshaw, editor, $6.95, 109 pp.*

Two biographies provide solid, if somewhat limited, accounts of Underhill's life. Margaret Cropper's earlier biography, *Evelyn Underhill* (Longmans, Green and Co., 1958) has the advantage of being written by a long-trusted friend. As a result of that relationship, she shared fascinating personal insights, but chose to forgo extensive documentation. Much is taken for granted in her accounts of her friend. Christopher Armstrong's later work, *Evelyn Underhill: An Introduction to Her Life and Writing* (Eerdmans, 1975), displays keen analysis and conjecture into periods of Underhill's life he examines thoroughly. A more comprehensive exploration of the whole of her personal and professional development would have strengthened his work.

In her recent biography of Underhill, *Evelyn Underhill: Artist of the Infinite Life*, Dana Greene has proved herself to be an artist of biography. If part of the artistic quest is intuiting one's subject well enough to capture its essence and depicting it truthfully and yet creatively, Greene has accomplished her goal. The obvious level of scholarship involved in her research is impeccable. Not only has she clearly read and critically interpreted the whole of the Underhill corpus, but she has also inter-

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viewed individuals who knew Underhill personally, exhaustively combed existing archives, and reviewed all known correspondence. This proves especially impressive when one considers the collection of over thirty books and almost four hundred articles and reviews.

Although she follows a chronological unfolding of Underhill's development using precise documentation, Greene never resorts to the lugubrious voice of the so-called "objective historiographer." Clearly she is writing of a close friend, affectionately discovered and researched from many different perspectives. Greene pursues the meaning of Underhill's life, not just the facts, by concentrating on the development of her mind and spirit. In that process she acknowledges the cultural limitations which dimmed past enthusiasm for Underhill's writings at the same time she portrays the "persistence of her vision and the passion and single-mindedness with which she searched for the infinite life [that] speaks across generations." Greene's depiction of this search is a convincing invitation to recover Underhill's legacy.

After her death, the *Times Literary Supplement* of London hailed Underhill as having "an insight into the meaning of both the culture and the individual gropings of the soul, that was unmatched by any professional teacher of her day." T.S. Eliot, Thomas Merton, and Charles Williams, to mention some of the more prominent literary figures, all acknowledged a debt to her influence in their lives.

June 1991 marks the fiftieth anniversary of Underhill's death and several indicators point to a contemporary acknowledgement of her place in the history of Christian spirituality. In 1988, the General Convention of the Episcopal church in the United States voted to add her to its liturgical calendar under the titles of "mystic and theologian." Several volumes of her works, many out of print for years, have recently been reissued. Morehouse Publishers alone has rereleased many of her volumes. In the spring of 1990, the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., hosted a week-long prayer and study session on Underhill, her life and writings. Both new books on Underhill are being well received. Once almost eclipsed by changing spiritual and theological trends, Evelyn Underhill is worth rediscovering. □

BOOKS

In the beginning was a story

WORDS WITH POWER
Being a Second Study of the Bible and Literature
Northrop Frye
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $24.95, 342 pp.

David Toolan

Have you ever wondered, as I have, why it is that dialectic and moral exhortation, however brilliant, don't measure up to works of literature when it comes to getting you to the threshold of a spiritual epiphany? How is it that the moral crusader and those who are doctrinaire, the Ralph Naders and Cardinal Ratzingers of this world—even when their logic is impeccable, their rhetoric urgent—somehow miss the point, summon our defenses rather than our consent? Why, if Karl Rahner and the *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* are so good at explicating hell or heaven, do I prefer to turn to Cheever, Rilke, or Dylan Thomas for the guided tour?

If you have had questions such as these, you will want to read the late Northrop Frye's new book, the sequel to his earlier *The Great Code* (1982)—which took its title from William Blake's maxim that "The Old and New Testament are the great Code of Art." "Why," asked Frye in that work, "does this huge, sprawling, tactless book sit inscrutably in the middle of our cultural heritage like the 'great Boyg' or sphinx in *Peer Gynt*, frustrating all our efforts to walk around it?" The answer was that the Bible's mythic structures—beginning with creation stories, Exodus dramas, and running up to the "new heaven and earth" of The Apocalypse—provide the basic themes and motifs to which Western literature constantly returns as to its wellspring, and upon which it rings continual variations. The Bible is thus seen as the epitome of the unity of Western literature, the original fountain from which it draws its power and authority for our lives.

Frye's thesis in *The Great Code*, that there is something more to the Bible than its purely aesthetic features—a genuinely kerygmatic or revelatory dimension—but that the Bible's mythic and metaphorical core is the launching pad for this "plus," was calculated to offend both secular critics (of the "Bible *as* literature" type) and religiously oriented Scripture scholars. The latter in particular were annoyed that Frye's stress on myth ("The literal meaning of the Bible is the imaginative and poetic one") seemed to be either dismissing or severely downplaying the historicity of the biblical accounts—thus throwing into question, for instance, all the old and new quests for the "historical Jesus." Many readers, in any case, found the author frustratingly obscure on whether the biblical stories were to be taken as essentially histories or fictions. ("I finished the book with an acute sense of disappointment," wrote John Dominic Crossan, the *Commonweal* reviewer at the time.)

Words with Power offers no retraction of the point that the Bible's metaphorical language is no mere ornament, but essential to whatever truth the Bible conveys. It does,

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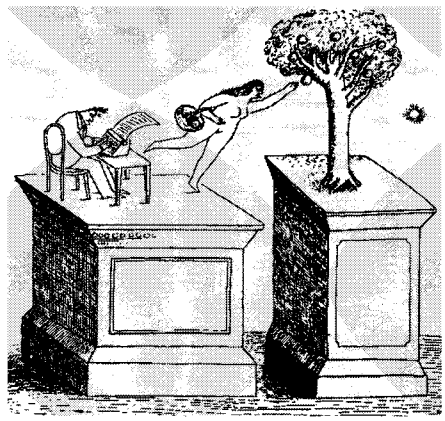
however, clarify the argument enormously. "The present book," as Frye puts it, "attempts to explain once more...why the beginning of the response to the Bible must be a literary response, and why within the Bible itself, all the values connected with the term 'truth' can be reached only by passing through myth and metaphor." This is not to reduce the Bible to literature; it is only to say that a literary or imaginative response forms an indispensable "beginning" for the more-than-literary vision the Holy Book proclaims.

If Frye is right (and I think he is), it's good news for the ordinary reader-meditator of the Bible, who can easily get the impression from scholarly exegetes these days that in order to understand the "real meaning" of the text, you have to be a Ph.D. in ancient languages, dogmatic theology, or historical sociology—preferably all of the above. The passage through myth and metaphor means that the Word of God is more accessible than that. All you need for starters is what you bring to a poem or a novel—an active imagination. Bernard of Clairvaux and Dorothy Day would have agreed.

The four essays of Part One of this book explore the idea of poets as the unacknowledged legislators of our race. That is, they inquire into the wider social function of literature and the basis of the poet's authority (or lack of it) in our culture. Frye argues that the power of poetic diction (and its threat to totalitarian regimes) derives from its rootage in the "primary concerns" of myth—which he defines as the drives to live, to love, to stay free, and to make a living—or in short, to have life more abundantly. Very basic stuff; myth simply expands on life-instincts we share with the whole animal kingdom. ("Secondary concerns" [or ideological concerns] cover things like social loyalties [law], religious orthodoxies, and the arts.) Frye sets the stage of this argument slowly, with what initially may appear as some rather tedious distinctions between different "modes" of verbal usage—descriptive ("just the facts please"), conceptual, rhetorical-ideological, and poetic. The fireworks come as he moves against the tide of popular, scholarly, and ecclesiastical prejudice which believes that conceptual (or doctrinal) prose is superior to poetry and myth as a truth-finder.



Not so, Frye contends. The big questions—who are we, where are we going?—can only be handled adequately by a "myth to live by" such as the Bible provides. Myth offers a vision of our nature and destiny, our place in a bigger world than the physical and social worlds around us. Newspaper description, conceptual analysis, and ideological rhetoric inevitably shut us up in narrower worlds, typically some kind of hell. (One of the most interesting corollaries of this stress on a "myth of concern" as the unifying factor in a culture is Frye's argument that the dominant modernist literary mode of irony implicitly presupposes a paradisal, Edenesque vision, otherwise there would be no irony.)

Frye's point in these early chapters is that the literary element in the Bible—and Western literature as a whole—plays a collusive role in delivering us from our living hells, that it sustains the larger view of our meaning and destiny by creating the mental space wherein, among other things, the gap between Moses or Jesus "back then" and our present tense is closed and we become one with the speakers. To be sure, gospel language goes beyond literature, but unless we learn to dwell in a fictional world where linear, calendar time collapses and "anything is possible," the historical Jesus won't help us. He'll be buried in the first century, a figure of the past.

It is the Bible's poetic and parabolic language that, much like meditation, induces altered states of consciousness that resonate with our organic will to live and live well. Jesus speaks to us across time for precisely this reason, Frye is saying, because he speaks directly to our own most profound and repressed mythic dreams. But it is the metaphoric language that prepares the ground for identifying our "I am" with Jesus' "I am." Without this kind of rehearsal, as it were, the Gospels' more ecstatic visions and power-words—of a new world of faith, hope, and charity, or that highest intensity of consciousness we call "spirit"—cannot take root or resurrect in us. Moreover, the gospel vision itself is poetic, which means that in this event we are not being steamrolled by rhetorical bluster, nor are we trapped by the dialectician's "compelling" logic. We can choose freely to enter this new world.

The four chapters of Part Two are meant to be mainly illustrative of the foregoing, but they somehow fall a little flat. Frye's method here is to track variations on the theme of the *axis mundi* in the Bible—images of ladders, sacred marriage, descents into the underworld, and titanism—and tell us how these motifs, weaving their way through (mainly English) literature, have shaped our cultural history. The purpose, of course, is to show that the primary concern of the Bible for abundant life is linked to the deepest intentions of Western writers. The allusions to various writers, from Chaucer to Pound and Robbe-Grillet, are, unfortunately, all too cursory.

The matter is further complicated by Frye's simultaneous exercises in comparative mythology in this section. He aims to give us a more intelligible and ecumenical account of how mythology in general forms the backdrop or "underthought" of the "myths we live by." Only in the case of chapter 7 on descents into the underworld, in particular his treatment of how nineteenth-century writers like Blake drew on the prebiblical myths of Atlantis and the "dying god" to recover from Newton's mechanizing of the heavens, did I find Frye had given me a full meal. Otherwise he is not kidding when he says that these later chapters, which seem more like free associations, introduce us to a "chaos of echoes and resemblance."

For all that, Frye at his meandering worst is better than most literary critics at their best. And I cannot think of anyone, except perhaps George Steiner, who has argued more effectively, indeed gracefully in Part One of this book, for the position that "In the beginning was the Word...." And that that Word is sheer poetry. □

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DYING, WE LIVE
A New Enquiry into the Death of Christ in the New Testament
Kenneth Grayston
Oxford University Press, $39.95, 496 pp.

Gerald O'Collins

This painstaking study of the death of Christ according to the New Testament comes from a veteran British exegete, now an emeritus professor of the University of Bristol. Writing not only for biblical teachers and students but also for theologians and preachers, Grayston insists from the outset on certain principles.

First, the death of Christ must be taken together with his Resurrection. In some texts (for example, 1 Thessalonians) the Resurrection carries the main theological weight, while in other texts (for example, Galatians) the Crucifixion does so. But Grayston emphasizes that the New Testament does not present us with two (separate) events but with one, double event: "the paschal mystery," to import a term from post-New Testament times. Second, whether dealing with the deliverance from evil or related matters, Grayston rightly affirms that the declared intentions of Jesus himself, while vitally significant, are not the only relevant criterion. "To demand that the death of Jesus should have only that meaning he gave it is to ignore the Holy Spirit. The death means *not only* what Jesus said it meant *but also* what it was found to mean" (italics mine).

Taking up the New Testament writings in a chronological order accepted by many scholars, Grayston carefully examines how the first Christians understood and interpreted the death of the Risen Christ. His inquiry takes him from such pre-Pauline formulas as those found in 1 Thessalonians 4:14 and 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 through to the Book of Revelation.

In this nuanced and elegantly written study our author highlights the value for his theme of six Pauline Epistles, the Gospel of Mark, and the first Epistle and Gospel of John. Other New Testament writings find their place but at "a secondary level of intensity." Beyond question, like others Grayston may have his favored biblical authors. But we do not need to be specialists in the first Gospel to bridle at remarks about Matthew being "inept," "banal," and having "nothing to add to Mark's understanding of the death of Christ—if indeed he grasped it."

The book has many merits—first of all, that Grayston does not resort to stereotypes in dealing with the Crucifixion. His eye is clear and his language fresh. Second, he illustrates abundantly that the death and Resurrection of Christ are not simply concerned with the removal of personal guilt. "The death of Christ," he writes, "provides a critical principle for assessing the formation of Christian conduct in relation to fellow Christians and to the world." This "social" approach in no way means that Grayston underplays the New Testament teaching on sin. "The death of Jesus discloses the seriousness of sin. It is not [merely] a case of people fundamentally good who occasionally (or even habitually) go wrong, but of people whose social existence is in the grip of Sin." Third, throughout the book our author elucidates the New Testament (in particular Pauline) conviction that at any given time human beings are shaped by the forces that have power over them. Being "in Christ" means being profoundly shaped and changed by the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

Given the wide scope of the book, Grayston does not always succeed in firmly establishing all his particular conclusions. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Prentice Hall) supplies a surer guide than our author to the Philippians' hymn and its language of "the form" of God and of a slave. Second, Grayston himself is aware that calling the death of Christ "a protective talisman" will not only be offensive to some contemporary readers but may also not represent accurately New Testament thought. Third, it seems quite unlikely that the original formula behind 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 simply stated "Christ died, he was buried, he was raised, he appeared," and did not include the individual(s) or group(s) to whom he appeared (see Luke 24:34). Fourth, in dealing with 2 Corinthians 8:9 it could be "premature to introduce thoughts of incarnation and 'preexistence,'" but I am not convinced that Grayston himself offers a more persuasive

Paul found it necessary to bring the cross more explicitly into the center of his pastoral instruction. His announcement of a new creation was not mere rhetoric: if a new social life for humanity was becoming available, former social structures must give way. But that is what they cannot easily do. Social structures under attack seek either to seduce their attackers or to hurt them. Among successful Christians at Corinth, who were being seduced by the kosmos to the conformist sophia of urban life, and to excessive self-regard at the Lord's Supper, Paul opposed the disruptive quality of the cross. Among Christians in Galatia, who wished to complete Christian initiation by the addition of circumcision, he opposed a death that carried the curse of Torah. By contrast, among Christians at Thessalonica and Philippi, Paul found it possible to interpret their suffering for Christ as suffering with Christ. Present hardship is the necessary condition of future glory, as the cross was necessary for the Resurrection. And of course, Paul himself was the test case: he had painfully sacrificed his former social identity and now was sharing Christ's sufferings in the hope of sharing his Resurrection.

—Kenneth Grayston
Dying, We Live

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interpretation of Christ's passage from being "rich" to being "poor." Finally, the bibliography has some surprising omissions: for example, G. Schneider on the Acts of the Apostles, H. Schlier on Galatians, and C.F.D. Moule on being "in Christ."

But, all in all, these are minor blemishes in a book that puts us in Grayston's debt. His scholarship is rich and his judgment repeatedly sure as he brings to life, in a new way, passage after passage of the New Testament. If this is his final, major work, I cannot think of a more impressive achievement to crown the learning of a lifetime. □

EVERY FIFTEEN YEARS

THE VIETNAM WARS, 1945-1990
Marilyn B. Young
HarperCollins, $25, 386 pp.

Murray Polner

"Mr. President," HEW Secretary Wilbur Cohen asked Lyndon B. Johnson at a cabinet meeting in early 1968, "why are we in Vietnam?"

Cohen had prefaced his question by saying that his fourteen-year-old son and friends had posed the very same question of him. "How would you answer it?" he asked LBJ.

Years later Cohen described Johnson's explanation: "The president took half an hour to answer, and the answer didn't make any sense whatsoever....If he had given that answer publicly, he would have been laughed out of court."

Yet until 1968 the overwhelming majority of Americans stood behind the war in Vietnam. Then, as now, ordinary Americans embraced the emotional patriotic appeals while the elites—in Washington, in corporations and unions, and in the media—backed the war with few questions or challenges. Only two senators, Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening, voted against the Tonkin Gulf resolution. And every president, from Truman to Eisenhower and Kennedy to LBJ and Nixon, set in motion the events that led to the deaths of fifty-eight thousand Americans and hundreds of thousands of Laotians, Vietnamese, and Cambodians.

Marilyn Young, an Asian history scholar at New York University, painstakingly discloses the mistakes and lies of those years in her illuminating and riveting synthesis. Her book opens by noting that, two months after the surrender of Japan, twelve U.S. troop ships were ordered to ferry thirteen thousand French soldiers to Saigon to fight the Vietnamese seeking independence, the same Vietnamese who had cooperated with the Allies in resisting the Japanese occupation. The pattern was repeated in the Philippines where General Douglas MacArthur had installed as head of state Manuel Roxas, "a collaborator closely associated with the most exploitative Japanese occupation policies," writes the author.

Where foreign policy was concerned, an uncritical generation of Americans passively accepted increasing military intervention in Southeast Asia. It was a generation deeply affected by Munich and terrified—with some reason—of Stalin's Soviet Union and Communists. Still, a nation born of revolution had now become the world's leading counterrevolutionary force, opposing virtually every regime it chose to define as Communist.

With little or no understanding of the consequences, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy (harshly criticized by Young) and their successors plunged into a region they barely understood, determined, as they repeated endlessly, to stop communism and resist aggression. The old dictum, that what was good for General Motors was good for America, was stood on its head. Young points out that we had once again assumed a responsibility grounded on the conventional premise that, "a world ordered by the principles and practices of the liberal capitalist system that governed America was good for America and good for the world."

The absurdity of applying this sweeping formula to Southeast Asia escaped most people in Washington. But, notes Young, there were exceptions like Paul Kattenberg, then the State Department coordinator of an interdepartmental group on Vietnam. In August 1963 Kattenberg returned from an official visit to Saigon and sat in on a National Security Council session attended by Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, Maxwell Taylor, Roger Hilsman, Bobby Kennedy, and LBJ. Years later Kattenberg described the meeting:

> I listened for about an hour or an hour and a half....There was not a single person there that knew what he was talking about....They were all great men. It was appalling to watch....They didn't know Vietnam. They didn't know the past. They had forgotten history....The more this meeting went on, the more I sat there and thought, "God, we're walking into a major disaster."

Finally, he spoke up, questioning their judgment. "They all just disregarded it or said it was not backed by anything."

Then, as now, Washington policy makers drew a tight circle about themselves and rendered life and death decisions without benefit of naysayers. Then, as now, a few experts were allowed in to confirm their wisdom; and Young reminds us of their flawed advice. Then, as now, Undersecretary of State George Ball was alone in trying to talk sense but was overwhelmed by those like the *New York Times*'s influential military correspondent, Hanson Baldwin, who wrote that, while "Vietnam is a nasty place to fight...there are no neat and tidy battlefields *in the struggle for freedom* [my italics]." And then as now, the rationale for the war kept changing—from the Soviet and Chinese threat, to the "domino theory," to America's burden in defending freedom, a burden (then, as now) never shared by our war party's children and grandchildren, let alone themselves.

Framed in terms of "the struggle for freedom," a generation of trusting Americans could hardly be expected to envision any alternatives to so massive a military inter-

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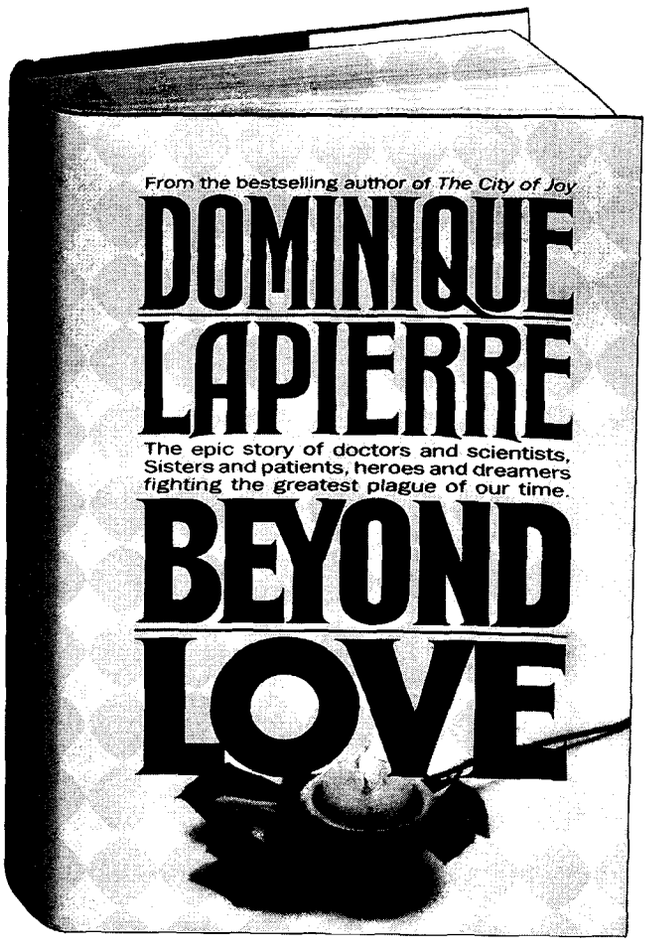
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vention. Hanoi was portrayed as a Moscow-Beijing puppet and Ho as an easy-to-hate tyrant. But when the human toll began to mount, LBJ himself became a victim, as Gabriel Kolko has written, "not simply of his own political errors but also of the failure of an entire class in pursuing the war and the hegemonic goals of American foreign policy."

When the war ended so ignominiously in 1975, pundits and ideologues were forced to explain why a small, semirural nation had been able to defeat the world's greatest military power. Soon their postwar rationalizations emerged: the military wasn't allowed to go all-out; the media had lost the war; America's youth—on the battlefield and as dissenters at home—had contributed to the debacle. Postwar, anti-military-intervention America was said to be suffering from the Vietnam Syndrome, and had become a "pitiful, helpless giant" paralyzed by an all-powerful Soviet bloc. Indeed, a good case can be made, as William Pfaff has argued, that the Persian Gulf war is in part an effort to show that the defeat in Southeast Asia "didn't count." Nor for that matter did Watergate, Teheran, the Iran-*contra* scandal, and Beirut.

Professor Young reveals little that is new, relying too much on secondary sources and tending to omit or slight many works that differ from her views, such as Peter Braestrup's provocative book on the Tet offensive. Nor does she express much sympathy for the Vietnamese boat people and their extraordinary efforts to escape postwar Vietnam. Even so, *The Vietnam Wars* is a graphic recapitulation of how and why the United States became embroiled in a war with so vague and unattainable ends at a price far greater than the public was ultimately willing to pay.

REVIEWERS

DAVID TOOLAN, S.J., *is an associate editor of* America *magazine and director of the Catholic Book Club.*

GERALD O'COLLINS, S.J., *is dean of the theology faculty at The Gregorian University in Rome.*

MURRAY POLNER *wrote* No Victory Parades: The Return of the Vietnam Veteran *(Holt, Rinehart & Winston) and edited* When Can I Come Home? *(Doubleday Anchor).*

And for what? Professor Young judiciously concludes that the American defeat "released new configurations of power in Southeast Asia, not readily acceptable to control from the outside. In Phnom Penh, as in Hanoi and Beijing, there were bitter rivalries older than the entire history of the United States. Henceforth, the history of the region would be made by the countries occupying it."

As her book went to press Iraq invaded Kuwait. "Why are we in the Middle East?" she asks in her preface. Without suggesting any parallels between Vietnam and Iraq, she offers a "new, harsher and unwanted conclusion"—"that war continues to be a primary instrument of American foreign policy and the call to arms a first response to international disputes."

If this is so, and I believe it is, then future generations of American young men and women will have to go to war every ten or fifteen years or so—even in the New World Order. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 178)

do as well as their Methodist, Episcopalian, or Lutheran brothers and sisters. And perhaps, too, Day's tract for the times may be just what is needed to jar things up.

LEIGH D. JORDAHL

Puzzling misquote

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: In his long and ultra-critical review of Thomas Day's *Why Catholics Can't Sing,* Archbishop Rembert Weakland inserts a puzzling parenthesis:

"(When Professor Day implies that the following phrase of mine, 'that our song is our common twentieth-century response to God's word here and now,' is totally lacking in any sense of the transcendent in liturgy but favors a 'horizontalism,' his criticism strikes me as simply ideological dishonesty and not worthy of reply.)"

First, that *is* a reply, of sorts. Second, the archbishop quotes selectively. The full sentence quoted by Day from an article by Archbishop Weakland, as transcribed on page 92 of *Why Catholics Can't Sing*, reads thus:

"If, on the other hand, the liturgical experience is to be primarily the communal sensitivity that I am one with my brother next to me and that our song is our common twentieth-century response to God's word here and now and coming to us in our twentieth-century situation, it [music] will be something quite different."

In his comments, Day calls particular attention to the words "communal sensitivity" as the archbishop's characterization of the liturgical experience. Whether the full sentence merits the interpretation Day gives it can certainly be discussed. But to omit that part of his own sentence that most clearly grounds Day's critique smacks of...well, ideological dishonesty.

REV. ROBERT P. IMBELLI

Too angry to listen?

Waltham, Mass.

To the Editors: Archbishop Weakland's surprising and virulent attack on Thomas Day's book *Why Catholics Can't Sing* avoids focusing on the problem. There is no question that Thomas Day is angry. Listening to the music that surrounds us in our churches today provokes many of us. What angers the archbishop is that Day harpoons him with a direct hit; the result is an embarrassing review.

The archbishop constantly asks Day for proof of this or that statement. No proof is necessary. Our ears tell it all. The musical expression of our Christian faith ridicules us and our belief. The archbishop wants yet more statistical studies. While our moral stances can never be evaluated by opinion polls, he feels music should be ruled by popular demand. Does this square with his views of professionalism in church music?

Pointing out deficits in the book, the review provides a listing of generally mediocre contemporary church composers. Topping the list is a great favorite, Alexander Peloquin. Please save us from this bleak music. Peloquin writes music that is extraordinarily simple and then adds "wrong" notes to make it sound "modern."

A careful exegesis leads to the conclusion that the critique's author has never thought carefully about the difference between "sacred" and "secular" music.

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Archbishop Weakland thinks that if "everyone sings" this or that ditty, Christian community will be created. This is his problem, but it is our problem as well because of his powerful position. Perhaps we should rewrite Anna Russell's remark to read, "It makes no difference what you sing as long as you sing it." But what does Weakland say of those who so hate the music thrown at them that they cannot bring themselves to sing it?

Rightly, Archbishop Weakland says that we must establish professionalism in our music programs. He says nothing about professional *church* musicians with all that is implied in that degree of specialization. For the past twenty-five years, instead of developing a plan to engage excellent musicians, our culturally unlettered clergy have been on a campaign to dismiss any vestige of professionalism from church music. As priests moved from assignment to assignment, the scrubbing has been effective. Ours is a patronage system. If Father X or Bishop Y likes you, you get the job, qualified or not. When Father M replaces Father X, out you go. Out goes the music program; consistency evaporates; hard-won gains are abandoned.

Herein lies the problem; here we search for the solution. History has shown, however, that leadership from the U.S. Catholic bishops—the only valid long-range solution—will not be forthcoming. It is too bad that Archbishop Weakland found Day's book so offensive that he seems to choke off all discussion on the matter. Let us not stop talking to each other.

DAVID F. GALLAGHER, C.S.S.

Not so far apart

Lincoln, Mass.

To the Editors: Thomas Day's *Why Catholics Can't Sing* is indeed flawed by Day's inability to sustain tight control of his argument and retain a clear focus. His irrelevant speculation about the suicide deaths of two liturgists, tacky as the musical phenomena he berates, is indicative of the author's intellectual inconsistency.

Yet the book deserves more serious attention than it received in Archbishop Weakland's sweeping dismissal. Despite the book's provocative tone, the archbishop should have more directly addressed the defensible premises girding Day's argument. He ignores Day's reasonable misgivings about the cult of personality so characteristic of the Catholic musical scene. He utters not a word about Day's nuts-and-bolts criticisms of widely used texts and musical settings. Weakland chides Day for neglecting the contributions of people like Eric Routley, but forgets Routley's advocacy of craftsmanship and his admonishment of overly romantic sentiment.

In a less obvious way, Weakland also evades Day's liturgical complaint that reverential dignity is too often missing in Catholic worship. He may have garbled his theology, but his sense is right—the typical liturgy rarely evokes a feeling of sanctified presence, place, or act (even though abstract theory says it's there). Implicit in Day's argument, however, is the questionable notion that the prevailing Catholic theological understanding of and emphasis on "community" inherently precludes ritual solemnity. Since this proposition underpins much of Day's enterprise, one wonders why Weakland did not comment on it.

Despite his obvious contempt for *Why Catholics Can't Sing*, Archbishop Weakland's closing comments reveal an important kinship with Day's thinking. Both agree the poor quality of church music is a cause for concern; both regret the pervasiveness of amateurism; both see a crucial need for professional leadership. It is all the more regrettable, then, that relations between the church and its musicians continue to be estranged. Archbishop Weakland can do his part by responding to the substantive points made in *Why Catholics Can't Sing* and by more honestly acknowledging the degree of discontent that causes such books to be written.

RANDOLPH NICHOLS

Flawed firecracker

Middletown, R.I.

To the Editors: I am extremely grateful to *Commonweal* for granting me the honor of publishing two reviews of my book *Why Catholics Can't Sing*—a brief one by Peter Steinfels [December 7, 1990] and a longer one by Archbishop

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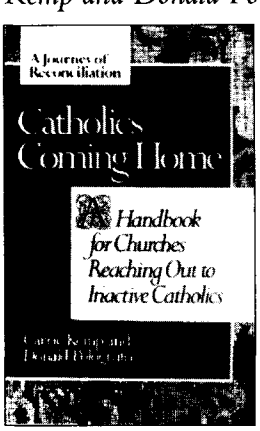

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Rembert Weakland [January 25].

Mr. Steinfels's review alerts the reader to the faults in my book but he also sees exactly what I was trying to do: "If Day's firecracker makes a lot of us jump, good." He also laments that those who should be "unflinchingly diagnosing" the weak singing in church, the atrocious music, and other things I mention in the book "are occupied, like the worst kind of conservatives, in dismissing criticism and protecting their psychological stake in post-Vatican II developments." That last sentence should have been read to Archbishop Weakland before he dismissed my book—solemnly and definitively, cover to cover.

The reactions to my book have taken two general forms, roughly parallel to the reviews in *Commonweal:* (1) "Well, it has flaws but firecrackers can be useful" and (2) "We are not amused," with a subtext to the effect that one must destroy the credibility of any presumptuous messenger who dares to bring bad news.

In any case, congratulations for printing two very different reviews. If you put them side by side and compare them, they are quite fascinating in what they (unintentionally) reveal, and much more fascinating than what I originally wrote.

THOMAS DAY

Out of the mouths of teens

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: In his comments on Thomas Day's book, Archbishop Weakland speaks of the "constant intrusion of.... 'folk' elements into the liturgy of the past."

Having read his review, may I respectfully offer the archbishop a bit of folk wisdom that one often hears from teenagers today: Dear Archbishop Weakland—Lighten up.

GEORGE WEIGEL

The reviewer replies:

There is so much in the letters by Leigh Jordahl, David Gallagher, and Randolph Nichols that I agree with. Already in the sixties I fought, although unsuccessfully, for a common service book/hymnal for the church in the United States. Perhaps it is time to take that up again. On the other hand, I am not ready to abolish the cantor. Our tradition involves more than hymnody; psalms with their refrains are also a part of our repertoire.

For Father Gallagher to jump to the conclusion that I am advocating rule by popular demand because I want a more profound examination of the causes for the nonsinging attitudes of our people is far from the truth. Nor does it follow that as long as one sings it doesn't matter what it is. Quality is most important. (My Benedictine background would be betrayed if I were to say otherwise.) Moreover, the questions I asked at the end of the review were intended to continue, not choke off, the discussion.

Father Imbelli is correct in taking me to task for not quoting the full text of my own quote, at least as cited by Professor Day. My shorthand was too short; I wanted to avoid in a review a lengthy discussion on the liturgical experience and its communal nature. But I see now I should have taken up that theme, since, as Randolph Nichols mentions, it touches on the basic assumptions of the Day book. The crux of the matter is indeed the relationship between the experience of the sacred and that of being a part of the assembly. Here I might refer to Pope Paul's beautiful insights in *Eucharisticum mysterium* (1967) on the different modes of Christ's presence in liturgical celebrations, i.e., in the assembly of the faithful, in the word, in the person of the minister, and, above all, in the Eucharistic elements. The distinct role music plays with regard to each one of these modes of presence and especially with regard to that of the assembly, as such, cannot be cavalierly dismissed, as, I am sure, both Father Imbelli and Randolph Nichols would agree.

I am certainly willing to take George Weigel's advice and "lighten up" the discussion. But I must admit that I find there is more at stake here than protecting "a psychological stake in post-Vatican II developments." Many of us are, however, defensive. Our fear right now is that we will throw out the baby with the bath, if, in our discontent, the liturgical principles of the liturgical renewal are not held sacred.

REMBERT G. WEAKLAND, O.S.B.
Archbishop of Milwaukee

Why Catholics can't win

Mankato, Minn.

To the Editors: John A. Coleman missed an important point about the Protestantization of Latin America in his essay on the topic, "Will Latin America Become Protestant?" [January 25]. He should have pointed out that the Pentecostal church, for one, needs no priests, no sacraments. All this community needs is a songfest (to open the right hemisphere of the brain), some glossolalia (a mantra), and plenty of prayer, and bingo!—here comes a "baptism of the Spirit" and another "mystical experience." This beats the Eucharist which shows up once a month; baptism, which no one remembers; and reconciliation, another monthly or semi-yearly event, all to pieces. Besides, the person leading all this action is one of our very own, not some educated, brain-washed outsider sent by somebody called "Bishop."

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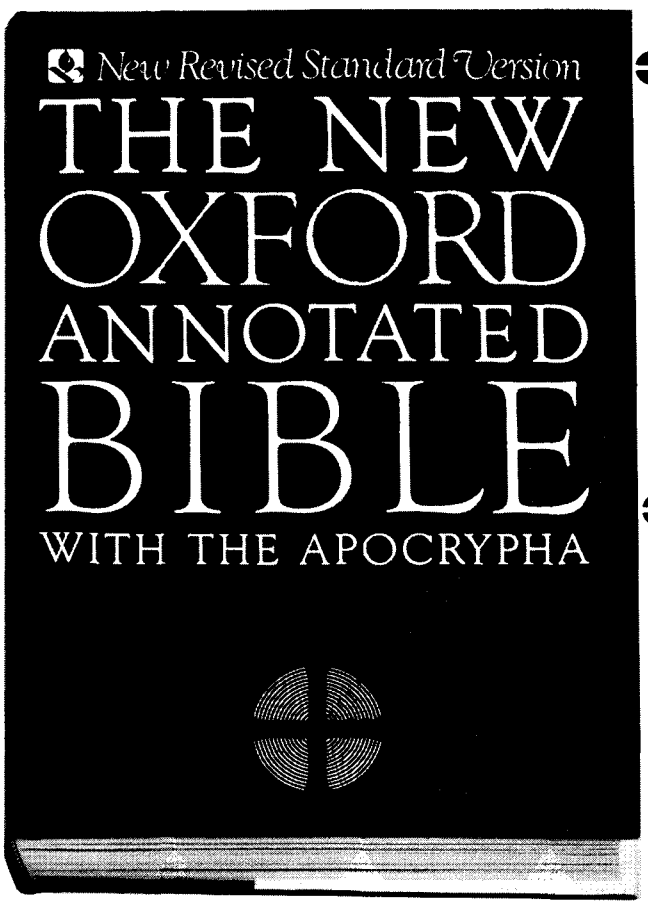

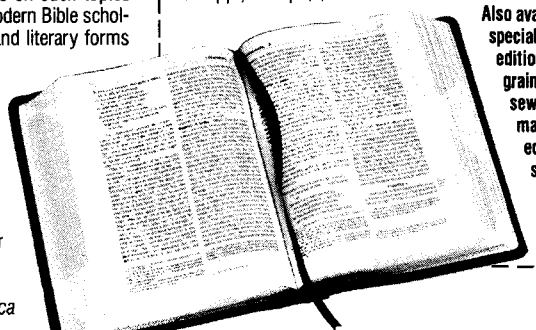

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The National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel commends President Bush and the men and women of our armed forces and those of the coalition against Iraq for their courage and sacrifice in protecting the peoples of the Middle East and of the world from the aggressor.

We plead with our Christian sisters and brothers, along with other people of good will, to join us in prayer that God may protect all those serving in the battle, give wisdom to world leaders, and enable peace and justice to prevail in this troubled region. We pray for an early end to the conflagration with a minimum loss of life.

Today the State of Israel is the only country in the Middle East to represent the democratic principles of liberty and of self-government. Christians throughout the world, along with Israelis, desperately want peace between Arabs and Jews. But efforts by outside powers to impose a solution or to link the Israeli-Palestinian Arab peace process to the Gulf crisis will seriously impede the chances for any substantive progress.

The National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel stands at the side of Israel. We urge others to join us in our commitment to America-Israel friendship, alliance and solidarity during these critical days.

Signed by Officers of the NCLCI Executive Committee

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President (Episcopalian)

The Rev. Dr. Franklin H. Littell
Pres. Emeritus (United Methodist)

The Rev. Dr. David Lewis
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(Roman Catholic)

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE FOR ISRAEL
134 East 39th Street
New York, NY 10016

If you agree with the sentiments expressed in this statement, you are invited to make a tax-deductible contribution to help us bring this message to the American people.

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